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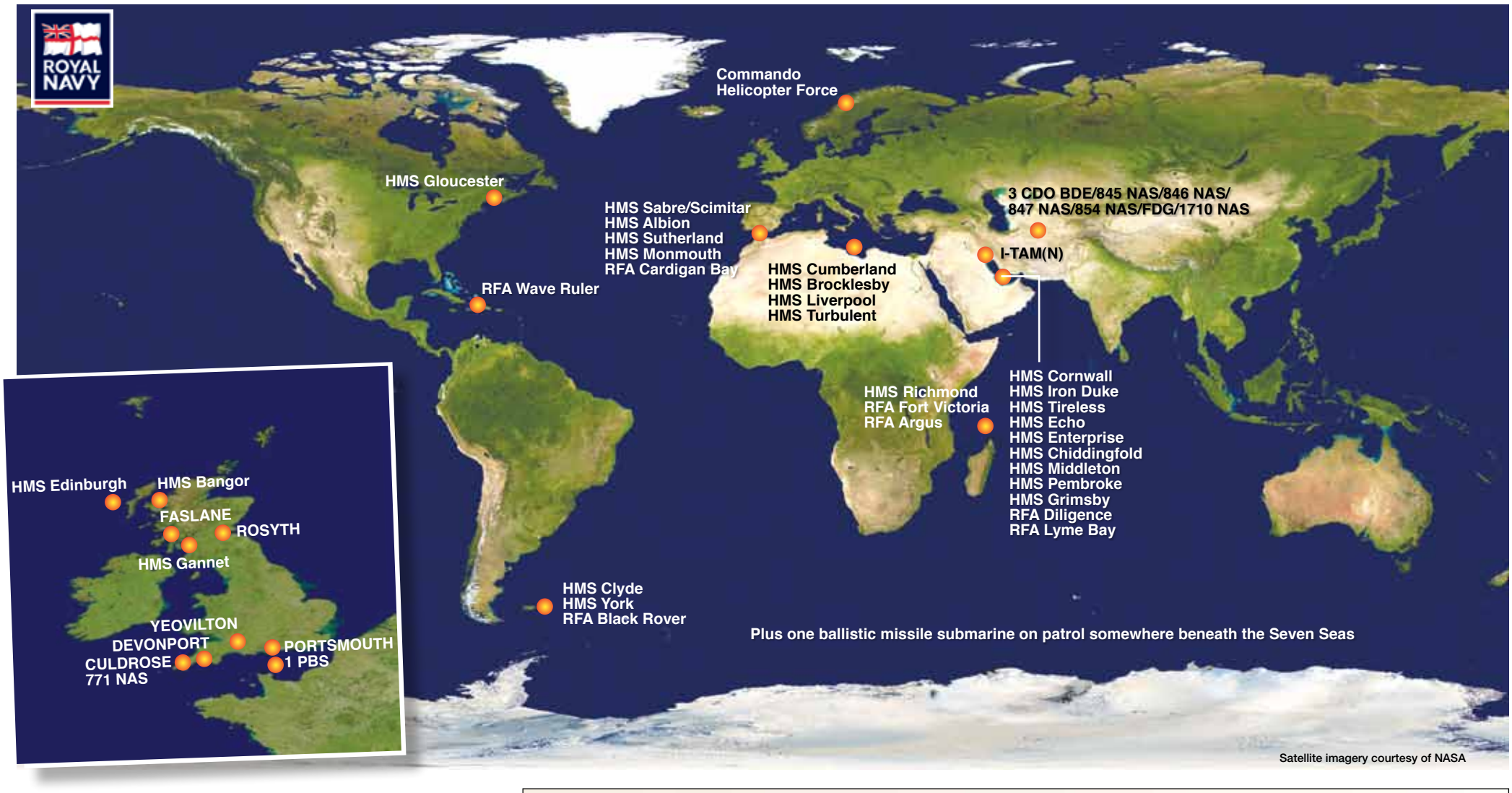
PATROL BOATS PUT ON A SHOW IN THE SOLENT

HEROES OVER HELMAND

A 'Bagger' Sea King of 854 NAS pulls away from Camp Bastion at the beginning of a gruelling surveillance mission in support of 3 Commando Brigade who've just taken charge of the British mission in Helmand. *See page 16.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, 854 NAS

GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

MORE cases of hello, goodbye again this month in the pages of *Navy News* – sometimes hello and goodbye to the same ship...

For example, **HMS Campbeltown** made her last entry into her home port, and days later was decommissioned *(see page 8)*.

Sister ship **HMS Cumberland** returned to the UK from counter-piracy patrols, via operations off Libya – and she is due to decommission shortly *(see page 22-23)*.

Similarly, Type 42 destroyer **HMS Gloucester** sailed into Portsmouth from a South Atlantic deployment (with a stopover in the Big Apple on the way), and next month she too will be bowing out from the Fleet *(see pages 14-15)*.

HMS Triumph also said hello to familiar surroundings – the T-boat returned from North Africa flying the Jolly Roger, testimony to the fact that her Tomahawk missiles were in the van of the British response to Gaddafi's campaign *(see pages 22-23)*.

Amongst the temporary goodbyes were those to the Black Duke – **HMS Monmouth** is heading out on counter-piracy operations and called in at Gibraltar on the way *(see page 7)* – and the ships of the Cougar deployment, **HMS Albion**, **HMS Sutherland** and **RFA Cardigan Bay** *(see page 4)*.

It was time to say a permanent farewell to the two Iraqi oil platforms in the northern Gulf as well; patrols around KAAOT and ABOT have been a regular feature of our pages in recent years but **HMS Iron Duke** has just conducted the last scheduled sweep by a Royal Navy warship *(see page 5)*.

Other activities in the region saw minehunters **HMS Chiddingfold** and **HMS Grimsby** sailing north into Umm Qasr, in Iraq *(see page 5)*.

And a final farewell to that old warhorse **HMS Invincible**, too – she has now reached Turkey in preparation for being 'recycled' or 'broken up', as it used to be known *(see page 6)*.

Operations in North Africa are not confined to the skies – we report on how RN forces, including HM ships **Westminster**, **Triumph**, **Cumberland**, **Liverpool** and **Turbulent**, have been making their presence felt *(see pages 22-23)*.

We also make our usual whistlestop selective world tour: **HMS York** in the Falklands *(see opposite)*, the **Commando Helicopter Force** in Norway *(see page 9)* and **3 Cdo Bde** taking over the reins in Afghanistan *(see page 16)*.

We look to the past – the secrets of the bones buried at **Haslar** *(see page 10)* and the affiliation of the **Unicorn** to the National Museum of the Royal Navy *(see page 31)* – and the future – the potential sailors of tomorrow showing their skills in a gathering of **URNU** boats *(see opposite)* and trials of an advanced landing craft *(see page 17)*.

HMS Edinburgh is preparing to return to the front line following a test-firing of her Sea Dart missiles *(see right)*.

Harking back to Herrick 12, we describe the bravery of **green berets** who won operational honours in Afghanistan *(see page 6)*.

Dipping into our regular pages, the Royal Marine Cadets of **Eastbourne** unit of the Sea Cadet Corps proved themselves the best of the bunch when they lifted the prestigious Gibraltar Cup *(see page 43)*.

And we carry a couple of first-hand accounts of wartime service on the **RNA** pages.

One describes the dangers of life on board a submarine in the Mediterranean – the risks included enemy aircraft, stormy seas (while the hydroplanes were jammed) and tackling Naval chefs' bread *(see page 34)*.

The other tells of a matelot who was blown off HMS Phoebe by a torpedo, had his life saved by a passing shark, then nearly succumbed to a handful of dried peas *(see page 35)*.

Edinburgh at the pinnacle

WOOOOSSSSHHHH...

With a flash of fire bright enough to bathe the Atlantic a pale orange momentarily, HMS Edinburgh fires her first Sea Dart in several years – proof that the Fortress of the Sea is back. With a bang.

The bang came when the Sea Dart – one of three fired by the Type 42 destroyer – downed a target drone off the coast of the Outer Hebrides.

The High Seas Firing was the last act in Edinburgh's long road back from refit and means she's ready to take her place in the line of battle.

The ship has spent 2011 undergoing an almost non-stop series of trials, tests and exercises, from two months in the hands of the Flag Officer Sea Training – the Fleet's 'MOT' organisation who determine whether a ship and, above all, her ship's company are ready for all the rigours of deployment and, should it come to it, war.

It was, says CO Cdr Paul Russell, "a taxing time" as the FOST staff – never known for being anything but relentless – threw fire, flood, disaster and war at the Fortress of the Sea.

Fresh from that spell of Operational Sea Training, the ship made for Scottish waters and her first visit to the capital in three years for a four-day visit to reaffirm bonds built over the 25 years the Portsmouth-based warship has been in service.

More than 3,000 people sampled life aboard the Type 42 while alongside in Leith.

The destroyer also hosted a reception and capability demonstration for local dignitaries and the wider ship's family and staged guided tours for local Sea Cadets, members of the RNA and youngsters interested in joining the Senior Service.

Edinburgh's sailors were invited to a golf championship which took place at Silverknowes course. Sailors who prefer larger, oddly-shaped balls were guests of Edinburgh RFC at Murrayfield as they hosted Neath Swansea Ospreys (and triumphed 23-16).

During the transit to Edinburgh from the ship's home in Portsmouth, the ship's company took part in a triple ironman competition: two teams of five swam, cycled and ran up to Edinburgh (the swimming was actually completed in the pool before sailing, but the other disciplines were completed onboard).

Next stop Faslane and Joint Warrior 111, the latest air-sea-land war games run by the British military in and off the west coast which would "take Scotland's capital ship to the next level of war fighting."

The Fortress of the Sea was charged with building on her experiences at FOST by defending a task group against concerted air attack and raining fire on the Queen's enemies.

And so to the Outer Hebrides and the final validation after that £17.5m refit – the very last performed on a Type 42 destroyer – which was completed in the autumn.

Some 3,750 square miles of sea and air space were cleared, before three Sea Darts were loosed from the rails of the launcher on the destroyer's forecastle. Within a second the missiles had accelerated to twice the speed of sound. In a few seconds more they were out of sight of the ship's 815 NAS Lynx, observing the firings from a safe distance for posterity.

A few more seconds and... KABOOM.

"The shooting down of live targets is the pinnacle of HMS Edinburgh's regeneration," said her delighted CO. "We now stand ready to deploy as an operational warship."

Which won't be too long off, for Edinburgh will be departing Portsmouth later this spring bound for the South Atlantic to replace her sister HMS York, currently patrolling the Falklands.

Picture: Lt Ben Dando, HMS Edinburgh flight observer



Falklands finally...

VIA Libya, obviously...

Fresh from an "eventful" – and unscheduled – start to her South Atlantic deployment (she was called upon to evacuate civilians from Benghazi at the height of the growing crisis in Libya) HMS York has belatedly begun her patrol of the Falklands.

Britain's fastest destroyer (34kts – quicker than Daring, Dauntless and Diamond which are more than 20 years younger...) had just one day alongside at East Cove Military Port (perhaps a blessing given its bleakness) before beginning her South Atlantic duties in earnest.

The 24 hours at the jetty meant some unenviable duties – chiefly ditching a fortnight's worth of gash and quickly loading stores – and some more pleasurable ones, like carrying 73 sacks of mail aboard. Well, opening the post was fun even if carrying and sorting it wasn't...

With the mail read and parcels opened, it was back to sea for exercises with Falklands-based land and air forces to prove the ability of all to defend the island chain.

Then it was back to East Cove for some essential maintenance to prepare the White Rose warship for the rigours of a South Atlantic winter (it's mid-autumn south of the Equator now).

While the engineers carried out essential maintenance, several members of the ship's company took the opportunity to use the excellent adventurous training facilities on East Falkland.

As we went to press, the ship was in training for an impending visit from a mobile team from Flag Officer Sea Training to ensure the Portsmouth-based Type 42 is upholding the standards she achieved during her pre-deployment training.

Just to add to the pressure of the FOSTies coming aboard, the ship will be visited by Commodore Portsmouth Flotilla, Cdre Rupert Wallace, who visits Pompey-based ships around the globe to see how they are running, meet the crew and discuss any issues that are raised.

As well as dropping in on York, the commodore will be visiting HMS Clyde, the Falkland Islands Patrol Vessel which is permanently based in the South Atlantic – but remains under the Portsmouth Flotilla banner with crew flying out every six months to man her.

Fishermen fall foul of the Mersey beat

TWO trawlers breaking the law were caught by HMS Mersey as she carried out fishery patrols around the UK.

An Irish-owned/Spanish-operated vessel which 'overfished' received a £2,000 fine after being boarded by Mersey's inspection team 200 miles off Land's End.

In a six-hour search of the boat, the Mersey team found the haul of hake aboard was larger than the trawlermen had reported. As a result, the sailors handed the fishermen a £2,000 on-the-spot fine.

Fresh from that successful catch, the River-class ship moved to the Irish Sea where she came across the Belgian vessel Flamingo.

An inspection of her found that the holes in the nets were too small – which meant young fish could not escape.

The Flamingo was detained in Liverpool for further investigation by the Marine Management Organisation.

Her owners received fines totalling £10,400, plus £3,176.30 in investigation costs while her skipper was fined £2,000.

Small but perfectly-formed

IT'S BEEN a quarter of a century since there's been such a gathering of the P2000 fleet.

Eleven of the Navy's small ships showed off their skills in the Solent, adeptly wheeling and swooping in tight formation.

Naturally all went well with the sailors' navigation and command skills, which must have been a source of relief to all involved as on board the lead ship was the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope.

The admiral sailed past and reviewed each of the small ships that help introduce young people in universities around the nation to the work of the Royal Navy.

Cdr David Wilson, Commander of the First Patrol Boat Squadron, said: "These young people are some of the brightest minds in the country.

"I see them as our future leaders – not just in the Navy but in the wider world.

"What we do benefits students in their development and teaches them things like leadership skills.

"In turn it benefits the Navy because we give influential youngsters a greater appreciation about what we do.

"Most people don't really see what the Navy does which is a problem.

"As an island nation, it's important we have people in society that know how important the Navy is."

There are in total 14 ships in the University Royal Naval Unit, each is usually based at ports close to their universities and is commanded by a lieutenant who is responsible for up to 51 undergraduates.

After finishing their exercise, two of the P2000s HM ships Exploit and Biter peeled off to visit Exeter as Navy News went to press – the first visit to the city by RN vessels in six years.

● *Eleven of the Navy's P2000s, joined by MTB 102 and two launches*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Tel Boughton

New RAS'll dazzle 'em

A NEW £25m mock-up refuelling complex is to be built at HMS Raleigh to meet the demands of the future fleet.

Replenishing at Sea – known throughout the RN and Royal Fleet Auxiliary as 'RASing' – is vital for the Navy's global operations.

There's already a replica RAS rig at the Torpoint establishment, where sailors from the RN and RFA learn the art of transferring fuel, ammunition and general stores from one ship to another in a benign environment ashore.

With the shape and size of the Fleet changing – the new Type 45 destroyers are roughly double the size of the Type 42s they replace, while the future carriers Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales will be three times as large as the Invincible-class they replace – a new training centre is required.

When it opens in 2014, the replacement complex – being built by Rolls-Royce – will feature a classroom plus two replica ship upper decks equipped with the latest RAS technology, all on hydraulics to simulate the roll of the vessels.

The facility will be fitted with the new Heavy RAS equipment, capable of carrying up to five tonnes of stores, instead of the existing RAS rigs which are limited to just two tonnes.

The new system will be expected to deal with up to 25 loads transferred every hour.

"This new training facility will allow us to properly and safely prepare our crews for the challenges they will face at sea, particularly in our new Type 45 destroyers and new class of aircraft carriers, before they undertake the task for real," said Raleigh's CO Capt Steve Murdoch.

"It is one of the most hazardous seamanship tasks the Navy engages in and so the training we provide must be of the highest standard.

"This maintains the safety of our ships' crews and ensures that vital supplies are transferred successfully."

Bangor brings relief to port

HMS Bangor played a vital role in saving the people of Mallaig from a humanitarian crisis.

The inhabitants of the small Scottish port were running short of food and struggling to cope with an influx of refugees.

The Faslane-based warship cleared the sea lanes into Mallaig of mines – allowing the safe passage of a cargo ship to sail in under the UN's World Food Programme.

If you didn't read about it in the papers, it's because it was all part of the latest Joint Warrior exercise which the Sandown-class ship took part in.

She was one of ten minewarfare vessels (four British, three Dutch, three Norwegian) plus frigates and destroyers from across NATO testing their ability to work together under mock wartime conditions off the west coast of Scotland.

The two-week exercise opened with the force coming under attack from speed boats, jet skis and larger craft as it sailed from Faslane – testing the abilities of Bangor's upper-deck gun crews and bridge team to the limit as the ship tried to outmanoeuvre (and outgun) the foe.

After a spot of minehunting work in co-operation with the Dutch and Norwegians, Bangor broke away to help the beleaguered Mallaigers.

Once the siege of the fishing town had been relieved, the Sandown-class ship rejoined the other minehunters to continue their sweeps of north-western waters.

Joint Warrior proved to be a valuable exercise for Bangor, coming at the end of a successful period of work-up and Operational Sea Training.

GLOBAL REACH

Cougar is unleashed

THE Cougar 11 deployment is under way as the core of a new amphibious task force sailed from the UK for exercises in the Mediterranean and the Middle East – and to prove a new defence initiative.

First to leave was group flagship HMS Albion, whose ship's company of 360 was augmented by an embarked force of more than 160 Royal Marines, many of whom lined the deck during the Procedure Alpha departure from Devonport.

Also on board the assault ship were two elements of the Commando Helicopter Force – two Lynx Mk7 helicopters from 847 NAS and two Sea King Mk4s from 845 NAS, which had flown onto the ship the previous day.

Albion was joined by amphibious landing ship RFA Cardigan Bay, which had been loading up at Marchwood military port on Southampton Water in preparation for Cougar.

Between them the two vessels carried men and machines from Taunton-based 40 Commando Royal Marines.

Completing the central triumvirate was HMS Sutherland, which sailed from Devonport the day after the amphibious ships.

The Commanding Officer of the frigate, Cdr Roger Readwin, said: "It is with immense pride I lead HMS Sutherland from her home port.

"I thank all the families and friends we leave behind today whose support is fundamental to sustaining our winning edge."

For the Task Group Commander, Cdre John Kingwell, it was a return to familiar surroundings, as he commanded the task group flagship last year.

On leaving Albion he spent a matter of weeks as Commander Amphibious Task Group before overseeing the organisation's transformation into the UK Task Group (UKTG).

He and his staff now face the challenge of proving the concept of the RN's Responsive Force Task Group (RFTG), born of last year's Strategic Defence and Security Review and effectively combining the previous Carrier Strike and Amphibious task groups into a single adaptable force, able to be put together and deployed at short notice.

Cougar has been designed to allow Cdre Kingwell's flotilla to develop and prove the concept of a UK maritime rapid response to uncertainty or crisis, ready to deal with unexpected global events.

And while the MOD was keen to emphasise that the deployment was not prompted by the situation in Libya, having been on the Fleet planning programme for many months before domestic unrest broke out in Tripoli and Benghazi, such a task group is poised to respond to short-notice tasking over a wide range of activities, including disaster relief, humanitarian aid or amphibious operations.

For that reasons it was decided that the lead element would sail early, which meant Easter leave being cancelled for hundreds of Service personnel and a huge effort by logisticians and waterfront support teams to make the ships ready for sea.

Cdre Kingwell said: "We sail in uncertain times but by doing so we give the UK a number of options.

"It is a great privilege to lead such a flexible force and I must thank all those ashore who have worked so hard over the last week to make this possible."

Ahead lie multinational amphibious exercises in the Mediterranean and then a transit through Suez for more exercises in the Indian Ocean.

The core of the task group is expected to be away for up to six months, and other ships will join and detach at various stages of the deployment.

Albion limbered up for the deployment by hosting a VIP visit and making a brief call at Portsmouth.

The Princess Royal was welcomed aboard to mark the tenth anniversary of the launch of the ship.

Commanding Officer Capt James Morley said: "It is a great honour and a privilege to host our sponsor onboard and the ship's company was thrilled to meet her."

Princess Anne also presented two Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, for 15 years of unblemished service, to PO Rob Ellis and LA Aaron Eynon.

Following the Princess's visit, Albion left Devonport and headed eastwards up the Channel, making her first visit to Portsmouth in more than a year when she stopped overnight during her trials and weapons training sea week.

A number of family members, representatives of maritime organisations and affiliates joined the assault ship for her transit back to Plymouth.

Other kith and kin had already enjoyed a day at sea in the warship, when Albion held her annual Families Day in the sea training areas to the south of Plymouth.

The visitors were thrown into the action right from the start, with three of Albion's landing craft picking up around 300 people from Devonport Naval Base and delivering them to the ship's flooded well dock.

They went straight into tours of the ship from the business end of the bridge and operations room to the mess decks.

After a buffet lunch there was a series of demonstrations, including a replenishment at sea with HMS Sutherland, which was also holding her families day, and mock attacks by Hawk aircraft of 100 Sqn RAF and the Naval Flying Standards Flight (Fixed Wing), based at Yeovilton.

Elliot Blakemore, a member of staff at West Bromwich Albion Football Club – one of Albion's affiliates – said: "It was a fantastic experience and a brilliant chance to see a warship at sea."



Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright



● *Sea Kings of 845 NAS land on HMS Albion in Devonport, after which she sailed as flagship of the Cougar 11 deployment (top)*

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher



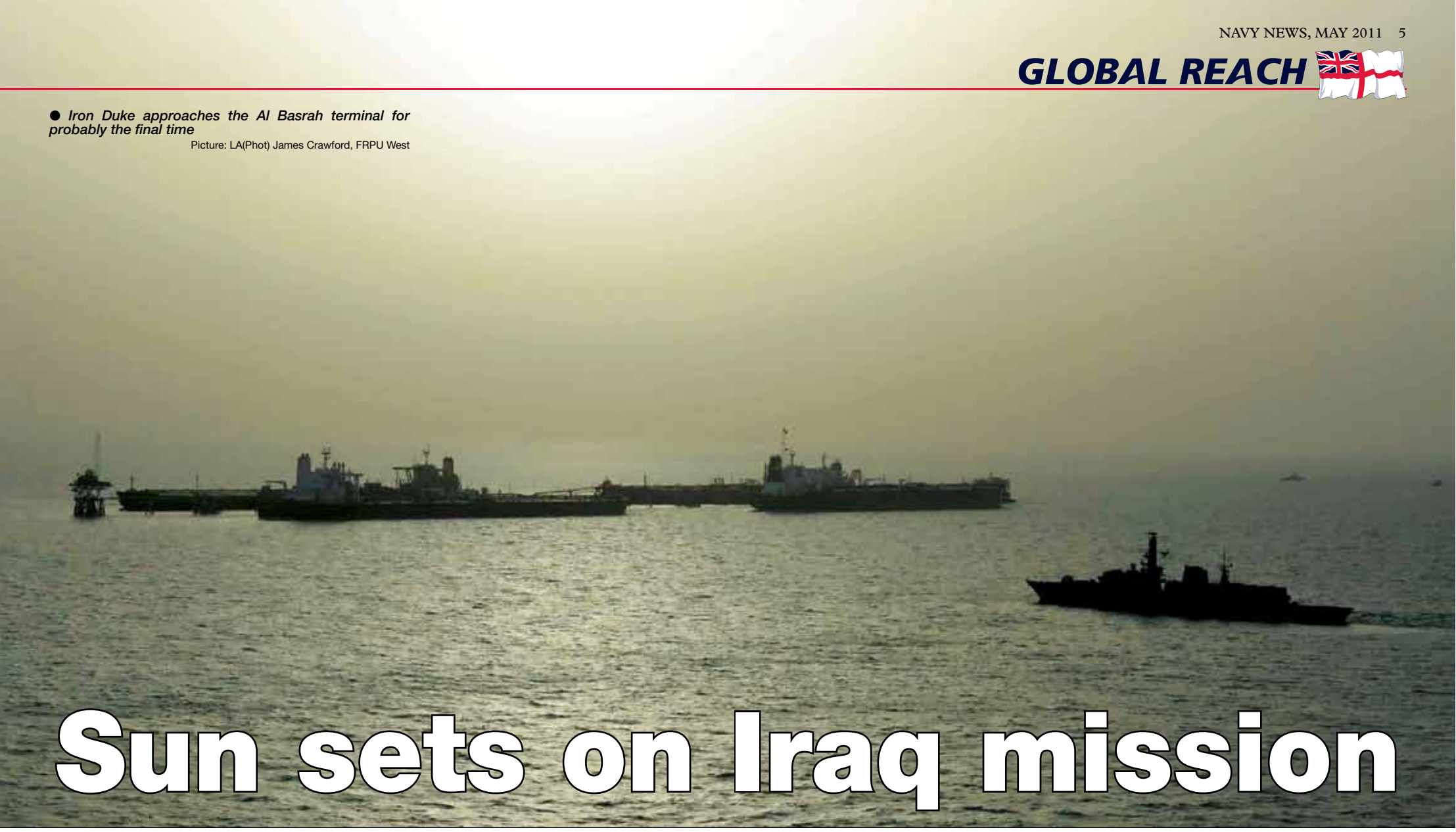
Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright



Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper



● *Procedure Alpha on the flight deck of HMS Albion as she left Devonport; (Above) RFA Cardigan Bay loads troops, vehicles and kit from 40 Commando Royal Marines at Marchwood; (Right) HMS Sutherland sails from Devonport as part of the core of the Cougar 11 deployment*



● *Iron Duke approaches the Al Basrah terminal for probably the final time*

Picture: LA(Phot) James Crawford, FRPU West

Sun sets on Iraq mission

AFTER eight years the Navy's mission to safeguard Iraq's two oil platforms is all but over after HMS Iron Duke completed the final patrol of the terminals.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, Britain's frigate fleet has been committed almost round-the-clock, patrolling the waters around the Khawr Al Amaya and Al Basra Oil Terminals – known throughout the Fleet as KAAOT and ABOT.

The two platforms deliver millions of barrels of black gold daily from Iraq's oil fields to waiting tankers – generating around 80 per cent of the country's income in the process.

Given their value the platforms, off the Al Faw peninsula at the tip of the Gulf, need protecting, performed principally by RN, US and Australian forces and, increasingly, Iraqi sailors and marines.

The latter have been trained by a UK-US team at Umm Qasr, Iraq's principal port and naval base, and have already taken over responsibility for defending the older KAAOT platform.

Now the Al Basrah platform is about to be handed over to Iraq's forces and on Saturday Iron Duke sailed away from the terminal for probably the last time after two months of patrol. The Royal Navy command team on the platform are expected to follow suit in the coming days.

Some Iron Men got across to the terminal before the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate departed, among them the ship's chaplain, Father Charles Bruzon. "The visit to the Al Basrah terminal provided me with a wonderful opportunity to exercise my pastoral ministry and I feel very privileged to have been able to conduct a church service for those serving there," he said.

In these final weeks around the ABOT, there's also been the chance for the Britons to swap places with their American counterparts on the Arleigh Burke destroyers USS Paul Hamilton and USS Higgins.

And to keep the 180-plus sailors and Royal Marines on board on their toes, Iron Duke's been conducting regular exercises not entirely dissimilar to those run by FOST off Plymouth.

"The damage control exercises the ship does twice during each patrol has prepared the Iron Men well to fight and win the internal battle," said CPO(UW) Jules Lee, the senior rating in charge of damage control aboard the Type 23.

Although the platform mission is now done, the Iron Duke's Gulf role is not. She'll spend the rest of the spring supporting Combined Task Force 152, one of numerous Allied naval groups east of Suez; in 152's case its aim is to provide reassurance and security in the shipping lanes of the central Arabian Gulf.

On a lighter note, the frigates enjoyed a few days' downtime in the Qatari capital of Doha, hosting an evening official reception, providing tours to local school groups and giving the ship's company a chance to let their hair down.

There's more of that to come during a two-week stand-off in Dubai, with a sizeable proportion of the crew flying out loved ones to meet them.

"After a long period at sea, we are all really looking forward to a well-earned rest in Dubai," said LS(AWW) Craig Jones.

It's not all fun, fun, fun in the UAE metropolis, however. Aside from the rest and recuperation there's quite a lot of maintenance and husbandry required on Iron Duke so she can continue her Gulf mission.

Meanwhile in Umm Qasr...

MINEHUNTERS Chiddingfold and Grimsby left the broad waters of the Gulf behind and sailed up God's Highway.

The two Bahrain-based ships navigated the tricky Khawr abd Allah as far as Umm Qasr to foster ties with the nascent Iraqi Navy.

Umm Qasr is Iraq's chief port – and main naval base. For nearly a decade it's been home to a largely Anglo-American training and advisory team who've been helping to forge a new Iraqi Navy in the post-Saddam Hussein world.

The work of the Allied team – in its latest incarnation known as the Iraqi Training and Advisory Mission Navy or ITAM-N (*Navy News* readers will probably remember it best as the NaTT or Naval Transition Team) – is all but done.

The RN vessels spent two days in Umm Qasr seeing the progress made, getting to know their Iraqi counterparts, and laying on a demonstration for international VIPs.

The ITAM-N team hosted an afternoon on the range, where the Cheery Chids and Grimsbymen were given the chance to get used to several weapons, including MP5 and M4 carbines, before a shooting practice.

That was followed by a keenly-contested football match against the Iraqi Navy, who were able to maintain their two-year winning streak, beating Grimsby 3-0 and Chid 2-0.

The pitch proved challenging, being covered in sand and grit and though the results did not go the RN's way, the matches attracted quite a crowd of Iraqi Naval personnel and allowed them to mix with their Royal Navy counterparts.

On the second day of the visit, Chiddingfold hosted a formal lunch for Britain's Ambassador to Iraq, Dr John Jenkins, and the Head of the Iraqi Navy, Rear Admiral Hussein.

The lunch was also attended by the British Consul General for Basra and a number of senior Iraqi, US and RN officers.

Following lunch the guests were treated to a tour of the Hunt-class ship, while AB(D) Phil Rowland gave a diving demonstration in the murky waters of Umm Qasr harbour, displaying the equipment to an impressed crowd of onlookers, including Rear Admiral Hussein, himself a diver.

To complete the visit, Cdre Ahmed, the Iraqi Navy's Chief of Staff, hosted a meal for five members of each RN vessel at the headquarters.

The evening provided a good forum for discussion about the future of the Iraqi Navy, and a chance for those who have been to Umm Qasr before to meet with old friends.

The latter included both Chiddingfold's Commanding and Operations Officers, Lt Cdr Charles Maynard and Lt Pete Davis respectively, both of whom have served with the training team before joining the minehunter.

"It has been wonderful to see the progress that is being made by the Iraqi Navy," said Lt Cdr Maynard.

"To bring Chiddingfold into Umm Qasr has been a real privilege for us all and for Pete and myself to be able to meet many of the officers and sailors that we previously served alongside is very special.

"There is a genuine and lasting bond between the Iraqi Navy and the Royal Navy that goes back many years and so to be able to renew that friendship during our visit here has been fantastic."



GLOBAL REACH

Officers show Wight spirit

NOW, where's the obvious place to show naval officers from the Gulf the art of navigation?

Correct. The Isle of Wight.

International students at the Maritime Warfare School in Collingwood left Fareham behind briefly for some time with HMS Cattistock as the minehunter hosted a navigational training course around the Solent and Isle of Wight.

For the two weeks of training the students were in good hands. Cattistock's CO Lt Cdr Adam Northover is one of the RN's most trusted navigators – he's been the navigation staff officer with the Flag Officer Sea Training.

He was on the bridge for almost every one of the eighty runs completed by the visiting foreign officers – a mix of sailors with upwards of ten years' experience with their respective navies… to some just out of their staff colleges.

Students from three Gulf nations – Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait – plus Brunei experienced passages into and out of Portsmouth Harbour and around the north and south-east coast of the Isle of Wight.

Although the weather was fine and dry for most of the fortnight, most mornings dawned with fog or haze – making it tricky for the students (and bridge team) to pick out reference points.

"I can think of no better way of refining navigation skills than careening around one of the busiest waterways in the country in a versatile ship such as a Hunt," said Lt Cdr Northover.

"The entire ship's company benefited from the challenges encountered by the exercise – and the fine weather was an added bonus."

Capt Wahab Al-Hajji of the Kuwaiti Navy said he "enjoyed the new experience of operating out of an English port – and the ship's officers and crew were very helpful and friendly".

Proms make a comeback

AFTER the success of last year's event, the Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines will again be hosting the South Coast Proms on Whale Island in Portsmouth over two nights this summer.

Up to 7,000 people are expected to attend the July 1 and 2 musical spectacular, which will feature a mixture of classical, contemporary, military and mainstream music and conclude with a firework display.

Tickets, priced £20, are available from www.southcoastproms.com or 023 9231 2007. The audience are encouraged to bring their own food for a 'picnic in the park'.

Beyond the call of duty

AS 3 Commando Brigade take over the reins in Helmand, fellow green berets – mostly from 40 Commando – have been honoured for their bravery in that troubled land on Operation Herrick 12 last spring and summer.

Two of their number – Lt Jack Anrude and Mne Lewis Lockwood – received the Military Cross for deeds under fire, while L/Cpl Ryan Shelley has earned the George Medal for saving the lives of a helicopter crew when their machine crashed.

The commandos were among more than 130 men and women across the Forces recognised in the latest series of operational honours announced by Whitehall (*a full list can be found on page 39*).

Troop commander **Lt Jack Anrude** was on patrol with Afghan Army forces one day in June, moving through a maze of alleyways when an insurgent gunman stepped out in front of him and unleashed a hail of automatic fire.

The commando officer was hit twice – once in the head striking his helmet and once in the arm – while two other members of his patrol were seriously injured.

Lt Anrude ignored his injuries, and immediately resolved to lead his patrol to safety, moving over 200m of open ground.

During that withdrawal, one of the Afghan troops was injured. Lt Anrude returned to pick him up, despite automatic fire peppering the area, and carried the Afghan to safety, pausing only to return fire.

Reflecting on what happened that day – and his award – the now Capt Anrude said:

"I was trying to imagine what my parents would think and hoped they would be proud – my mum passed away last year.

"I also know that I wouldn't be standing here if it hadn't been for the lads. I'd have been out on a limb without their professionalism. I'm going to have to buy them beaucoup de beer when I get back."

Mne Lewis Lockwood was awarded his MC for bravery one month earlier. He was leading a patrol through a hotspot infamous for homemade bombs, using his metal detector, when the men were ambushed by accurate and sustained enemy fire.

The young commando was knocked to the ground by a bullet which passed through the side of his body armour and ricocheted off his weapon into his left hand.

Instead of seeking cover – or help – Mne Lockwood returned fire allowing his comrades to withdraw from the danger area.

Then he swapped the metal detector to his uninjured hand and calmly led the patrol to safety, carefully searching for improvised explosive devices – knowing any mistake would prove fatal.











● *Honoured for their deeds in Helmand... (Clockwise from above) Capt Jack Anrude MC; Mne Lewis Lockwood MC; Maj Philip Totten MBE; Mne Alexander Tostevin MiD; Mne Mark Jackson CGC*

Portraits: LA(Phot) Si Ethell, 40 Cdo

As the patrol escaped one ambush, they were subjected to fresh fire from another insurgent ambush.

Mne Lockwood remained calm and pressed on as this was the patrol's only route to safety. With only one hand, the green beret cleared and marked the route around no less than seven suspected devices, only allowing treatment and evacuation to hospital when he was assured of the patrol's safety.

L/Cpl Ryan Shelley's George Medal was earned when the company medic ran to a helicopter crash site near his forward operating base.

There he was confronted with burning wreckage, a trapped crew and exploding ammunition. Despite smoke and flames around him, Shelley entered the wreckage to quickly assess the four crew members he could see.

With help the medic was able to cut the unconscious pilot free from his harness and ordered others who had now arrived to take him to a second helicopter which had landed nearby.

L/Cpl Shelley then returned to rescue the trapped co-pilot, carrying him to safety before performing the delicate clinical procedure of inserting a tube into his throat.

He went back to the wreckage a third time to rescue another crew member but sadly he was beyond saving.

The commando remained at the crash site until the flames died down to oversee the traumatic task of freeing the bodies of the remaining airmen.

Despite his relative inexperience and with utter disregard for his own safety, the lance corporal was instrumental in saving the lives of the Allied airmen.

Maj Philip Totten is made an MBE for his leadership "in probably the most dangerous company area" at Sangin.

He proved a first-class leader in battle, regularly leading patrols, and an equally skilful diplomat as he fostered relations with locals.

In the words of his citation, he "never once lost the confidence of the people he was sent to protect" as he tackled Taleban propaganda head-on, "textbook" fashion.

Mne Mark Jackson hurled a grenade back at insurgents – then used his body to shield a comrade who was unware of what had happened. He receives the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

And **Mne Alexander Tostevin** receives a mention in despatches for covering fire which helped two comrades to reach safety.

They came under fire as they returned to a patrol base where Tostevin was manning a sentry post. He was shot in the head and knocked to the ground by the impact of the direct strike against his helmet.

The bullet penetrated his helmet and grazed his skull, causing serious injury – but he got back on his feet and machine-gunned the enemy. Tostevin only sought medical help once his colleagues were safe.

3 Cdo Bde take charge in Helmand, page 16



'Simply a good bloke...'

FAMILY and colleagues have paid tribute to Lt Cdr Ian Molyneux killed during a shooting aboard HMS Astute in Southampton docks.

The 36-year-old weapons engineering officer from Wigan died from wounds sustained, while shipmate Lt Cdr Christopher Hodge was also shot during the incident aboard the new hunter-killer submarine.

Astute was making her first port visit outside Faslane and was hosting civic dignitaries when the shooting occurred shortly after mid-day on Friday April 8.

An ardent rugby league fan, Lt Cdr Molyneux leaves three sons and a daughter, plus his widow Gillian (*with whom he is pictured above*).

She described her husband as a "very humble, very modest" person.

She added: "Ian was utterly devoted to his family. Everything he did was for us. He was very proud to be an officer in the Submarine Service. He will live on in our four beautiful children."

Capt Phil Buckley, Captain of the Faslane Flotilla said Lt Cdr Molyneux had been a "great asset" to HMS Astute.

"His untimely death is a big blow to his family, who have the Flotilla's deepest sympathy," he added.

"His loss will also be felt by his shipmates and across the Service. He was, simply, a good bloke."

■ AB Ryan Donovan, 22, from Dartford has been charged with Lt Cdr Molyneux's murder as well as the attempted murders of his shipmates Lt Cdr Christopher Hodge, PO Christopher Brown and CPO David McCoy.

Donovan has been remanded in custody and will appear before Winchester Crown Court on June 10.

A last look at Vince

THERE were three final cheers for HMS Invincible – and not a few tears shed as the Falklands veteran was towed out of Portsmouth for breaking up in Turkey.

A sizeable crowd gathered on Round Tower in Portsmouth for a last glimpse of the former flagship, which had been laid up in the naval base for the past six years.

Much of 'Vince' was cannibalised – her engines, propellers and most equipment was removed to keep her sisters running – the now defunct Ark Royal, which Invincible passed on her way out of Portsmouth, and HMS Illustrious.

The carrier has now arrived in Aliaga on Turkey's west coast. The firm which won the contract to break her up, Leyal, has already dismantled other RN vessels, notably the Type 42 destroyer trio of Newcastle, Cardiff and Glasgow, which were sold in 2009.

As for Ark Royal, the most high-profile victim of last year's defence cuts, she has now been put up for sale – but not as a working warship.

The Disposal Services Authority – the arm of the MOD which sells unwanted military equipment – is inviting bids for the 20,000-ton aircraft carrier.

Ark is not being sold for further military use: she will either be 'recycled' (ie broken up) or sold for 'commercial use' – bidders must provide details of that use, the cost of the conversion work and her ultimate destination.

The carrier has been stripped – or will be stripped – of key equipment before the sale, including her main engines, three of her eight diesel generators, her Phalanx and 20mm guns, decoy systems, comms kit, aircraft landing aids, propellers, ship's boats and stores.

Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson



Board aboard the Mighty O

THE men and women who oversee the running of the Royal Navy decamped from their usual meeting place in Whitehall and headed to Plymouth.

Rather than meeting in the surroundings of Drake, however, the board convened aboard Britain's biggest warship, HMS Ocean, while she was alongside in Devonport.

The board – which comprises senior officers and civil servants including the First and Second Sea Lords, Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff and Commandant General Royal Marines – took advantage of the helicopter carrier's conference and planning facilities to chew over issues from current operations and future requirements of the Service to morale.

After discussing affairs of state the board, which meets seven times a year, chatted with members of Ocean's ship's company over a buffet lunch.

As for the Mighty O, she's been carrying out aviation training for much of 2011. She was due to sail on the Cougar deployment, joining flagship HMS Albion, as *Navy News* went to press.

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Black Duke, your flexible friend

WE KNOW one of the RN's current buzzwords is 'flexibility' but this is taking it to the extreme.

This is HMS Monmouth as you've never seen her before, enjoying the sun alongside in Gibraltar – there's the unmistakable shape of The Tower, the historic naval base headquarters, in the centre of this panorama image created by the Black Duke's *lensmeister*, LA(Phot) Stu Hill.

The Rock was the first port of call for the Type 23 frigate as she made her way towards the Horn of Africa, where just about now she should be joining the concerted international effort against piracy, drug running, terrorism and people trafficking.

In addition to that overarching mission, the frigate will be exercising with Allied naval forces in the region in a series of war games.

Families and friends saw the ship off from Devil's Point in Plymouth on a fine early spring morning – raising a 'Cheerio me handsomes' banner to wish the Black Duke on her way.

A few days later and glorious Mediterranean skies greeted the frigate off Gib – as did HMS Sabre.

One of the two fast patrol boats operated by the Gibraltar Squadron – the Senior Service's constant guardians of The Rock – Sabre escorted Monmouth into harbour, as she and her sister Scimitar do for all visiting Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels.

The brief stop in Gib allowed the Black Dukes to stretch their legs – and allowed a first run out on this deployment for the frigate's rugby side; they went down 35-10 to a strong Gibraltar Barbarians side (who've already dispatched two visiting RN vessels this year).

Monmouth's visit came in the middle of an unusually busy period in the naval base.

Indeed, officials on The Rock say more warships have visited the British outpost this year already than in all of 2010.

Liverpool stopped off in Gib on her way to take up duties off Libya... while the ship she replaced, HMS Cumberland, used the naval base as her last port of call before sailing back to Devonport.

And Gibraltar also served as the inaugural 'pitstop' for the first ships of the Cougar task group (HMS Albion, Sutherland and RFA Cardigan Bay) who spent three days there.

While the ship's companies organised stores (and played some football – *see page 47*) Albion's green berets carried out some training, including some time on the ranges of the Royal Gibraltar Regiment at Windmill Hill, the last chance for the Royals to brush up their skills before Cougar gets going in earnest.

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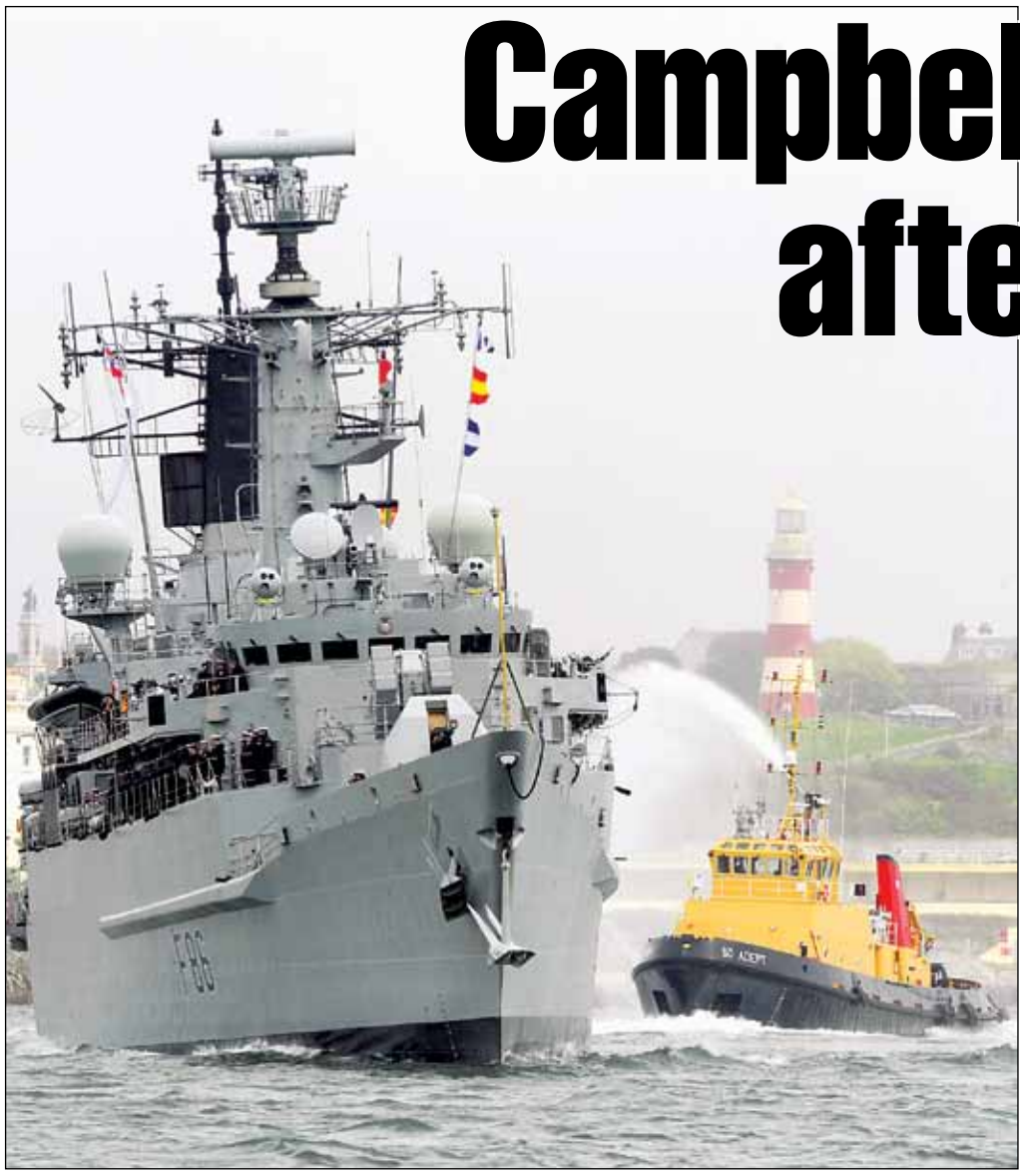
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Campbeltown bows out after historic visit



TYPE 22 frigate HMS Campbeltown has bowed out of service after a final act of remembrance for an illustrious forebear.

The warship's last port of call under the White Ensign was St Nazaire in western France, where her wartime predecessor had played the central role in the "greatest raid of all" – Operation Chariot, which in March 1942 put the vast Normandie dry-dock out of action for the remainder of the war.

Campbeltown, a veteran American destroyer, was stripped down and her bow loaded with tons of explosives, and she was driven through a storm of gunfire into the dock gates.

Commandos went about destroying what machinery and plant they could then tried to escape overland, their planned withdrawal by sea having been rendered impossible.

The hidden time bomb aboard Campbeltown detonated later that day, killing a party of German officers and technicians who were inspecting it – and destroying the dock gates.

Despite a high loss of life – 169 RN and Army men died, and 200 more were taken prisoner – the raid ensured German capital ships had no safe haven on the Atlantic coast of occupied France.

The current Campbeltown sailed into the French port to mark the 69th anniversary of the raid, taking RN veterans Bill 'Tiger' Watson and Stephen Barney with her, as well as a contingent from 131 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers and 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery – units with a connection to the raid.

The frigate's Commanding Officer, Cdr Keri Harris, described the ship's attendance at the Anglo-French commemorations as a "poignant curtain call."

"It is humbling to think that St Nazaire was very heavily bombed by the Allies and had to be rebuilt after the war, but they still venerate the memory of the first HMS Campbeltown and the audacity of Operation Chariot," said Cdr Harris.

"This turned the tide in the Battle of the Atlantic and gave the French hope in 1942.

"Their remarkable gratitude and *bonhomie* is still evident today."

And so to the final act of the frigate's 22 years of active service.

With a blast of water from a tug and an escort in the form of patrol boat HMS Raider, HMS Campbeltown made her final entry to Plymouth on a grey spring afternoon – barring any last-minute change of heart by politicians, the last time anyone would see the frigate under way with the White Ensign fluttering at her stern.

Campbeltown raised her lengthy decommissioning pennant to celebrate 22 years of proud service and fired a salute as she exchanged ceremonial formalities with the Royal Citadel fort on the Hoe.

It was, said Cdr Keri Harris, Campbeltown's final Commanding Officer, "an emotional day for all involved".

His ship was gearing up to head to the Indian Ocean on anti-piracy duties when news of her premature demise was announced under last autumn's Defence Review.

Instead, Campbeltown has spent the final months of her active RN career around the UK helping to train pilots, navigators, submariners, cadets from Dartmouth and warfare officers.

A week after her final entry Campbeltown followed her sister ship Chatham and carrier Ark Royal onto the disposal list, with the last two 22s – Cornwall and Cumberland – set to join them when they return from deployment.

She was formally decommissioned at a ceremony on a Devonport jetty attended by the ship's company, their families and guests with civic, ceremonial, military and commercial links with the ship – including Col Bob Montgomery MC, a survivor of Operation Chariot.

Likening a decommissioning to the "break-up of a family", Cdr Harris said: "This is a very sad day, but also one of celebration for the life of HMS Campbeltown.

"I can't deny this day is tinged with sadness.

"But the decommissioning of the ship is part of the Government's necessary cost-saving measures as it is under stringent financial restraints.

"I am proud of my ship's company because although I could not lead them on deployment as planned, due to the ship decommissioning, they have done the Royal Navy, me and this country proud in recent months."





● *HMS Campbeltown makes her final entry to Devonport, accompanied by spray from a tug (above) and patrol boat HMS Raider (left), trailing her decommissioning pennant (bottom of page). A week later she was formally decommissioned at a ceremony on the jetty at her home port (below left and below).*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper (final entry) and LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow





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(Sub) zero hour

AIR and ground crew from the Commando Helicopter Force have completed three months inside the Arctic Circle to hone skills built up over four decades.

Personnel from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons decamped with their Sea Kings and kit and caboodle 1,400 miles to northern Norway for Exercise Clockwork, designed to test the Junglies in the harshest of climates.

The Sea Kings have to leapfrog to northern Norway, stopping at RAF Leuchars, then an oil rig in the middle of the North Sea to refuel.

From there it's the open ocean until an airfield in southern Norway. Between rig and the Norwegian coast there is the 'point of no return'; if anything goes wrong with the Sea King, there's no turning back: it's a case of sink or swim.

Luckily, none had to and, after another pitstop in southern Norway, the helicopters followed the coast before finally heading inland for their destination: the air base in the small town of Bardufoss, 200 miles inside the Arctic Circle.

This is something CHF has been doing since 1969; the winter training has become as regular as, er, clockwork.

But before there could be any thought of Junglie operations in the snow there was a course on the art of survival in the unforgiving conditions from Royal Marine Mountain Leaders (wind chill meant the effective temperature plunged to -45°C – typically in Bardufoss the lows are a 'mere' -26°C).

The first three nights of the course are spent living under canvas with the luxury of a cosy arctic sleeping bag.

Having been lulled into a false sense of security come the final night the trainees face a survival situation – they're left to fend for themselves with only the clothes they are wearing.

"The most painful part of the course is the swim, with full kit, in the Bardufoss swimming pool, which is carved in the ice of a lake," said Lt Cdr 'Spidey' Clarke, Officer Commanding Clockwork, enjoying his seventh deployment to the Arctic Circle.

"It certainly is quite testing but the tot of rum issued at the end of the swim certainly aids recovery."

Once thawed out and warmed up, the flying could begin – everything from simple manoeuvres to landing on the top of mountains to deliver Royal Marines to their chosen place of battle.

Equally tough is looking after the veteran Sea Kings in such conditions.

"Cold metal at such low temperatures will act like superglue and aircraft maintenance becomes a gruelling test of character," said Lt Cdr Clarke.

"The engineers are also ready at a moment's notice to retrieve the Sea King if the aircrew have to make an emergency landing, which they call a 'down-bird'. If the down-bird is in a remote area, the aircrew can quickly be in a real survival situation. Ten minutes flying can equate to ten hours of hard yomping through deep snow."

Just to add to the 'fun', Clockwork ended with more camping outdoors, this time operating the aircraft in a tactical environment.

That meant the newly-trained personnel even had to defend their makeshift base from attacking Norwegian troops, day and night (Bardufoss is home to an entire Norwegian division…).

When not attacking CHF, the locals are really quite friendly. Facilities at Bardufoss have vastly improved in recent years with plenty of internet access for the Brits to keep in touch with loved ones back home. There are also plenty of outdoor activities laid on – skiing, snowboarding and sledging pulled by huskies.

Or you could just enjoy the Arctic landscape bathed in snow.

"Enjoying northern Norway's breathtaking scenery with its mountains, fjords, glaciers and even stray elk wandering across icy roads can offset the time away from home," Lt Cdr Clarke added.

After a four-day flight back with overnight stops in central and southern Norway and Scotland, the CHF fliers are back home in Somerset having lived up to, says Lt Cdr Clarke, "the Junglie ethos of 'train hard fight easy.'"

Meanwhile back in Blighty...

Most CHF ground and aircrew are more likely to endure sand than snow – all three front-line commando helicopter squadrons are heavily engaged in Afghanistan.

There the Junglies and Lynx of 845, 846 and 847 NAS have all come under attack from insurgents – from small arms fire to rocket-propelled grenades.

To beat your enemy, you need to know your enemy – so pilots and aircrewmen were given two days' instruction in the Taleban's art of war.

They were allowed to target helicopters with typical weaponry used by Afghan rebels provided by the Defence Intelligence department.

In doing so, they were shown the techniques and stances used by Taleban fighters when they try to get a Sea King or Lynx in their sights.

"It is essential that our aviation crews fully understand the types of weaponry that they face whilst deployed in Afghanistan," said Lt Mick Cowie, CHF's intelligence officer and veteran of three tours of duty in Afghanistan.

"This hands-on experience ensures they are fully trained and prepared to face the threat."

Pictures: Neil Pearson/ImageAviation



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Going Dutch, going down

SOMEWHERE beneath the surface of the Mediterranean divers from the Royal Navy and their Dutch counterparts 'fly' the NATO flag.

Dive teams from HMS Brocklesby and the HMNLS Haarlem plunged into the central Med to test their abilities to work together – and help each other out should the clearance divers get into difficulties.

Both ships are attached to NATO's Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1 – an international mine warfare force which moves around European waters dealing with the detritus of wars past and ensuring Allied navies are always ready to deal with wars present and future.

Having exercised around the Strait of Gibraltar and the Western Mediterranean earlier this month, the group has shifted eastwards to carry out Operation Active Endeavour.

It's a task typically performed by frigates and destroyers: monitoring shipping movements in the Mediterranean, ensuring only vessels plying lawful trade on the high seas pass.

The Portsmouth-based Hunt and Haarlem broke off from those monitoring activities for a day of diving exercises.

Brocklesby's clearance divers can operate to depths of 60 metres (196ft) to tackle the threat of mines or underwater explosive devices.

If something goes wrong at those depths – typically decompression sickness (aka 'the bends') – here in the UK a casualty is flown immediately to a specialist unit in a hospital, such as the centre at Chichester…

…something not, of course, possible in the Med. In the middle of a (fake) minefield. Instead, Brocklesby features a recompression chamber that allows the ship's company to treat a diver initially.

Which is exactly what they did in tandem with the Dutch divers (without, of course, subjecting the casualty to the real effects of the bends).

"The exercise was a great way to test our skills," said Brocklesby's executive officer Lt Jace Hutchinson RAN – also the group diving officer for the NATO force.

"It's crucial we exercise a diving emergency as often as possible to keep not only the dive team but also the whole ship's company prepared for any eventuality.

"It was also good to dive in company with our Dutch colleagues and share experiences – all of which will serve the task group well."

Since the diving exercise with the Dutch, Brocklesby has switched roles again and is now supporting the international mission off Libya (*see pages 22-23*).

Red Rose revamp

IF YOU'RE hoping to find news of HMS Lancaster ploughing through the seven seas, you'll have to wait until March 2012.

After back-to-back deployments to the Gulf and Indian Ocean, the frigate is undergoing an £18m revamp in Portsmouth in the hands of BAE Systems.

Engineers have ripped out the galley, removed the propellers and propulsion shafts, plus two diesel generators and the Type 23's 'brain', her command system.

In the coming months, a new brain will be fitted, plus new diesel generators, new galley and new shafts, while reduced-friction paint will be applied to the hull to make the frigate faster.

Lancaster's also receiving the latest version of the Seawolf missile system, which effectively doubles the range of the air-defence weapon, and an automated 30mm gun is being installed.

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● *Some of the bones exhumed during the careful disinterring operation at Haslar's sprawling burial grounds*

The secrets of Haslar's dead

THE remains of 45 bodies from the grounds of the Royal Hospital Haslar are to be formally reburied, after revealing many of the secrets of their graves to forensic scientists.

On May 4, they will be privately reinterred in simple linen shrouds and returned to the Paddock where they were originally buried up to 250 years ago.

The following day, a funeral service – probably more formal and well-attended than any of them were given at the time – will be held at St Luke's church in Haslar. Among those invited to attend will be the RN Medical Director General and the Russian Defence Attaché.

The remains were examined by forensic specialists from Oxford and Cranfield universities as part of a research project to discover more about military life and death in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

The opportunity to disinter and examine the bodies came when Defence Estates took part in a land quality assessment before Haslar was sold.

It was well-documented that thousands of bodies were buried in the Paddock, but nobody knew how far the burial grounds extended. One of the aims of the research was to find out exactly where the burial grounds lay before any development took place at the site.

As a result 45 bodies were exhumed and examined over a period of five years.

"As the team worked on these remains we felt very close to the people involved," said Cranfield University's Dr Andrew Shortland who led the research.

"We read history books and think we know about wounds and amputations, but to see the evidence at first hand really brought home to us what these people suffered and what they went through.

"One of the individuals had multiple injuries, caused by falling from the rigging perhaps, with two broken legs, an arm with multiple fractures, and a smashed jaw.

"However, his wounds had started to heal, so we know that he lived on for months, and we also know that people were trying to save him.

"With a jaw smashed like that he could not have eaten, so someone must have been feeding him through a spoon and looking after him."

Dr Shortland added: "Examining the bodies has given us many important insights. Studying the skeletons showed that all of the individuals were likely to be male and under 35 years old at death; it is likely that two of them were under 20.

"Several features give indications as to their health in life and cause of death. Several lost teeth during their lives and had caries and abscesses.

"Most individuals were quite heavily built, and particularly strong in the upper body, which would be likely if they had spent many years hauling on ropes or undertaking other types of physical activity.

"One of the younger individuals has a deep cut mark on the head of the right humerus. The shape of the cut suggests that it was probably caused by a heavy sharp object, perhaps a sword or cutlass."

Dr Shortland said: "We've had huge support from the local people, many of whom have very fond memories of Haslar and have come to lectures and open days.

"We loved working at Haslar. It has a very peaceful atmosphere, wonderful views, and altogether is a very special place."

The details the researchers uncovered have been the subject of several academic papers and also featured on the BBC programme *Timewatch*. A book is planned, probably for publication later this year.

It will never be known how many bodies lie in the burial grounds at Haslar, but conservative estimates put the figure at about 16,000.

Among them are many soldiers and probably families from the army of Sir John Moore, who died at Corunna in 1809. His burial, in the poem by Charles Wolfe, has shades of the Haslar ceremonies:

Slowly and sadly we laid him down,
From the field of his fame fresh and gory;
We carved not a line, and we raised not a stone,
But we left him alone with his glory.

No useless coffin enclosed his breast,
Not in sheet or in shroud we wound him;
But he lay like a warrior taking his rest
With his martial cloak around him.

This hallowed ground

DURING the 18th Century, the whole area of land to the south-west of the hospital, including the grounds known as the Paddock, were used as burial grounds, covering nine acres and within a walled area, *writes Eric Birbeck of the Haslar Heritage Group*.

This included the ground on which the Terrace now stands, as skeletons were uncovered during the course of building the row in 1798.

Further remains were found in 1910 during building work on the Surgeon Rear Admiral's residence as part of the Terrace and also during excavations in 2009.

Records of the burials at Haslar during 1755-63 held at the Public Records Office Kew indicate in excess of 2,500 burials during this time.

Dr James Lind, Physician to the Hospital, reported that in the years 1779-80, some 1,716 deaths occurred at Haslar.

In addition to this it is also known that bodies of sailors decimated by injury, disease and execution onboard ships at Spithead and Portsmouth harbour were also landed at Haslar jetty for burial. This includes 80 members of the Russian Fleet who in 1770 were landed to Haslar suffering from typhus.

By the end of the 18th Century, it is estimated that in three years alone some 3,600 bodies were interred in the burial grounds.

It is believed that the remains of sailors who perished in the wreck of the 'Royal George' in 1782, including Rear Admiral Richard Kempenfelt who was onboard at the time, lie here as well.

On December 1 and 4 1805 ships returning from Trafalgar discharged their sick and wounded to Haslar and many who succumbed to their wounds are buried here.

Jonathan Baptista, a Landsman of the Achilles who fought at Trafalgar whilst suffering from tuberculosis, died onboard at Spithead in February 1806 and is buried here.



● *A sketch depicts a ward at Haslar circa 1805 – a time when the fallen were buried in the hospital's grounds*

The sick and wounded of Sir John Moore's army who fought in the Peninsular War from 1808-14 also returned to Haslar in great numbers by troop ships, suffering from wounds and typhus, and 528 were buried between October 1808 and December 1809, with 552 Naval burials in the Paddock.

In the same time period 126 Russian sailors and cavalrymen were buried after being admitted to Haslar from the Russian Fleet impounded in Portsmouth Harbour from ships commanded by Captain Alexi Grieg, Captain – Commodore Ignatyev and Vice Admiral Seniavin.

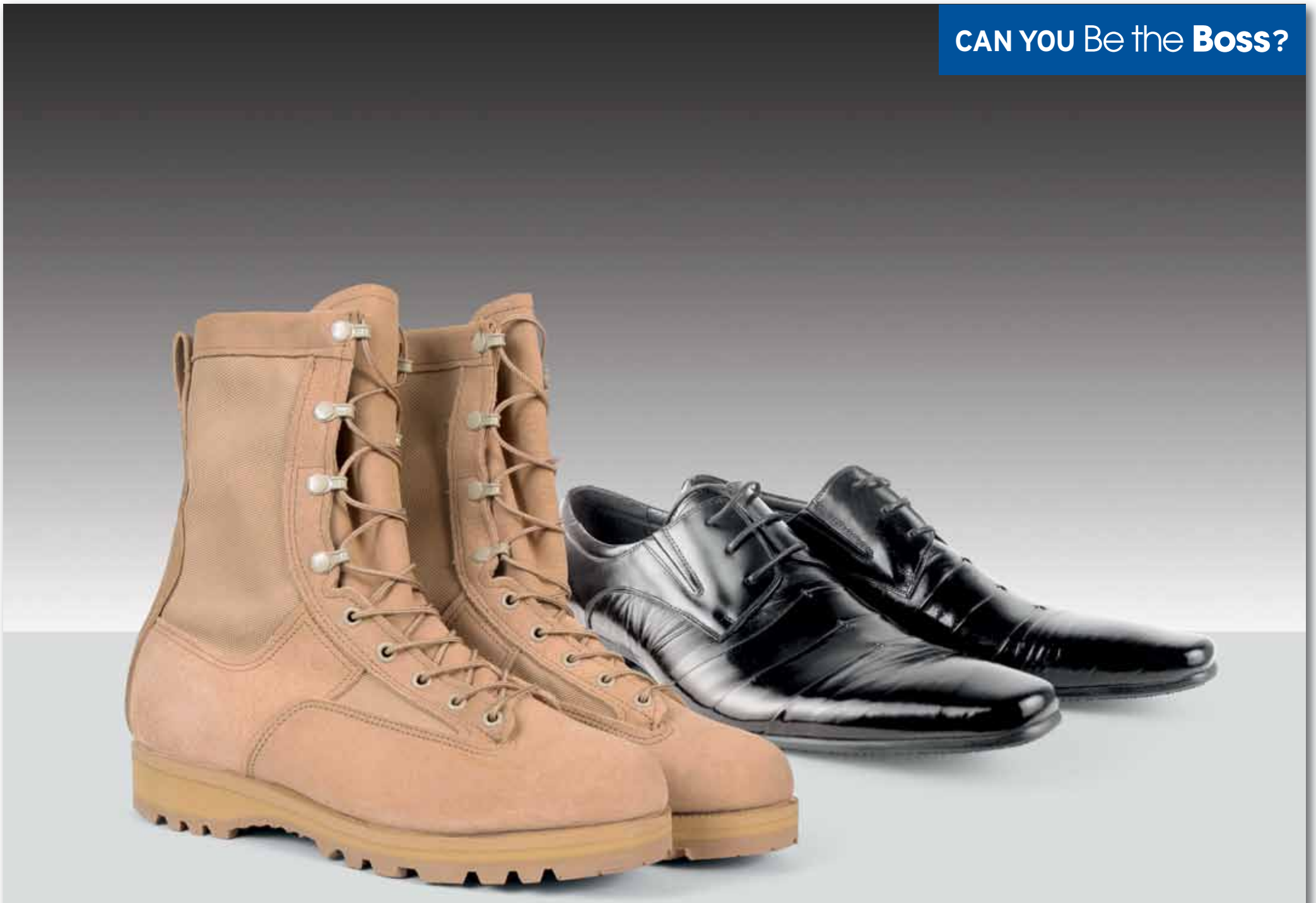
Troops who retreated from Walcheran in 1809 and the Battle of Waterloo in1815 also lie here.

Many of the Haslar staff (including washerwomen) who succumbed during 1808-9 to infections whilst caring for patients and washing linen also lie within the grounds.

In 1826 the North corner of the Paddock was enclosed by a wall, the ground was consecrated and then used as a cemetery.

The headstones scattered across the Paddock were carried inside the cemetery and placed against the cemetery wall. Amongst those recorded was the first Governor of Haslar, Captain William Yeo.

In April 1859 the Naval Cemetery was opened at Clayhall, about half a mile away, and the Haslar cemetery (now the Memorial Gardens) ceased to be used.



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The gallant Gloucester

FRIDAY, January 10, 1941 is a day in which the balance of war in the Mediterranean tipped once again.

It was the day on which the Luftwaffe made its debut above the Middle Sea. Within 24 hours German bombers had landed their first bomb on HMS Gloucester.

Air attacks dominated the short life of the light cruiser. They would, in time, cause her bloody demise.

Gloucester was the first of the second-generation Town-class cruisers to be built in the late 1930s, ships which would be at the forefront of the naval war in European waters.

HMS Gloucester's war effectively lasted 362 days – May 26 1940 to May 22 1941; the first months of the conflict, the 'Phoney War', were spent in the Indian Ocean in a fruitless hunt for German surface raiders, among them the Graf Spee.

It was the decision to transfer the ship to the Mediterranean which would seal her place among the annals of the Senior Service's greatest ships – and seal her fate.

The cruiser arrived in the Med as France was tottering on the verge of defeat – and Mussolini was about plunge his dagger into his neighbour's back.

On June 10 1940, he did so and the very next day Gloucester was in action against the Duce's forces.

She was sent as part of a 20-strong battleship-carrier-cruiser-destroyer force to intercept Italian convoys to North Africa. Two days into Mussolini's war, Gloucester scored her first success, sinking an Italian minesweeper in conjunction with her sister Liverpool. For good measure, the two cruisers also pounded Tobruk.

A fortnight later and another Italian scalp, the destroyer Espero.

The Italians avenged that loss with a high-level bombing attack on the Mediterranean Fleet in early July. Striking from 12,000ft, the enemy struck Gloucester's bridge – wiping out most of her command team.

Despite these terrible losses, the cruiser remained in action and took part in the first (indecisive) clash between the British and Italian Fleets off Calabria.

After a month's repairs in Alexandria, and with a new commanding officer, Capt Henry Aubrey Rowley, appointed, Gloucester was once again a scourge of the Axis.

She escorted numerous convoys to Malta, plastered Italian positions at Bardia, escorted HMS Illustrious in her legendary aerial strike on Taranto, and rarely escaped the attentions of first the Regia Aeronautica, then the Luftwaffe.

When the latter weighed into the fight during a two-day battle which crippled Illustrious and Gloucester's sister Southampton, the Fighting G – a proud nickname which she had acquired – she was hit by two bombs. One caused carnage in a Royal Marines' mess deck. The other did not explode – and a NAAFI assistant sat on it to prevent it rolling around before it could be cast over the side.

Repaired once more, Gloucester was again in the thick of the fight at Matapan – she was straddled by 15in shells from the Italian battleship Vittorio Veneto – before being sent to North Africa to bombard Axis troop concentrations and, finally, oil tanks at Tripoli.

She was damaged once more on convoy duties; first by a mine, then by a bomb which passed through her stern. No more than cursory repairs were carried out: the Fighting G was needed, first to escort a convoy carrying supplies for the Eighth Army in Egypt, then to ferry troops to Crete.

By now she was one of Admiral Cunningham's most trusted ships. To Britain's senior admiral in the Mediterranean, she wasn't the Fighting G but the 'gallant Gloucester'.

After a brief respite in Alexandria, the gallant Gloucester was ordered back to Crete. She would not return. (*That bitter story is recounted in our commemorative supplement*).

In time the 82 men who survived her sinking on May 22 1941, plus previous members of the ship's company and families would form the Fighting G Club. It is still active to this day.

So too is the spirit of the Gloucester. The name was resurrected 40 years later by the Type 42 destroyer, about to bow out of service any day (*see pages 14-15*).

Today's Gloucester carries the same nickname.

She downed two Iraqi Silkworms aimed at the USS Missouri in the first Gulf War. It remains the only successful missile-versus-missile engagement in the history of naval warfare.



Battle Honours

Lowestoft.....1665
Four Days' Battle.....1666
Orfordness.....1666
Sole Bay.....1672
Schooneveld.....1673
Texel.....1673
Ushant.....1747
Jutland.....1916
Calabria.....1940
Matapan.....1941
Mediterranean.....1941
Malta Convoys.....1941
Crete.....1941

Facts and figures

Class: Town-class light cruiser, Gloucester sub-class
Pennant number: C62
Builder: Devonport Dockyard
Laid down: Sept 22, 1936
Launched: Oct 19, 1937
Commissioned: Jan 31, 1939
Displacement: 9,600 tons
Length: 588ft (179m)
Beam: 62ft 4in (19m)
Draught: 20ft 7in (6.27m)
Speed: 32kt
Range: 7,320 nautical miles at 13kts
Complement: 800
Propulsion: 4 x Parsons geared steam turbines generating 82,000 SHP
Armament: 12 x 6in guns, 8 x 4in guns, 4 x 3-pounders, 8 x 2-pounder pom-poms, 6 x 21in torpedo tubes
Aircraft: 2 x Supermarine Walrus flying boats

PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORIES – Brian Hanrahan

A DIFFERENT war, a different foe, but a day in which air power at sea was immortalised.

Our dip into the vast photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum takes us back to Saturday, May 1 1982, and a Sea Harrier FRS1 leaving the ramp of HMS Hermes in the South Atlantic, destination Stanley, capital of the Falkland Islands.

Watching from the bridge of the veteran carrier was task force commander Rear Admiral 'Sandy' Woodward, 50 years old this very day. Woodward had watched the preparations in the dark, and watched in the pre-dawn gloom as the Harriers lifted off in the first wave.

He was there too a little over an hour or so later as the jump jets came back to Hermes "in ones and twos". At his side was a 32-year-old chap with large glasses.

Brian Hanrahan (*pictured inset, courtesy of the BBC*) was, of course, not a sailor (hence this is not 'Heroes of the Royal Navy'). But this day he would provide the Fleet Air Arm with an epitaph to match the RAF's 'few', given them by no less a personage than Winston Churchill four decades earlier.

Hanrahan was not a particularly experienced reporter when he joined Hermes for the long journey south.

He had cut his teeth in the backrooms of BBC news before stepping in front of the camera as a correspondent in Northern Ireland.

In April 1982, with a task force hurriedly gathering in the ports of southern England to re-take a little-known island chain half a world away, Hanrahan, a cameraman and sound recordist joined the press corps accompanying the Fleet.

Then, as now, the Navy was wary of the media. Hanrahan was well aware of this mistrust. His solution: to address everyone in Hermes' wardroom bar – and to buy them all a drink.

It worked. As did the young reporter's attitude throughout the short, but bloody, war for the Falklands.



Flt Lt David Morgan, an RAF pilot serving with 800 Naval Air Squadron, became close friends with the BBC team on Hermes. "There would never be a single occasion when they did not treat us with scrupulous fairness and honesty," he recalled.

And now, on the morning of May 1, Morgan's Harrier, hit by 20mm cannon shells from Argentine flak, was one of 12 jets returning to Hermes.

Sandy Woodward stayed on the bridge "until I had seen all 12 of them thump down on the deck". So too did Hanrahan.

This was the first day of the war – and the BBC man was eager to file a report, just as the British public was eager for *any* news from the South Atlantic.

Journalists thrive on facts, on the quantifiable. Might he report, Hanrahan asked the admiral, how many aircraft had taken part in the raid?

He might not, for it could give the enemy a clue as to the strength of the Harrier force. Hanrahan crossed out the original draft of his report. He still hadn't come up with a satisfactory sentence when he came to file over the telephone. When it came to numbers, he simply 'ad-libbed', he admitted.

"I am not allowed to say how many planes joined the raid, but I counted them all out and I counted them all back."

And thus a line was born which has since been repeated in every documentary and almost every book about the 1982 war (including Hanrahan's memoirs of the conflict).

To many Brian Hanrahan would become the voice and face of the war in the Falklands. He would go on to become one of the BBC's most respected diplomatic correspondents covering the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the Tiananmen Square massacre, the funerals of the Queen Mother and Princess Diana.

When HMS Illustrious visited the Thames in 2009 for Fly Navy 100 commemorations – Hermes and Invincible had both, sadly, long since paid off by then – it was to Hanrahan that the BBC turned to provide live coverage; among the men he interviewed was David Morgan.

Eighteen months later, he was asked to cover the very final flight of the Harrier at RAF Cottesmore. Cancer sadly prevented him from doing so. The 16 RN and RAF pilots recorded him a get-well message.

Brian Hanrahan outlived the Harrier by just five days. His words from May 1 1982, however, are immortal.

■ THIS photograph (FKD 127) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at **www.iwmcollections.org.uk**, by emailing **photos@IWM.org.uk**, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

Deeps get WETT

SINCE the end of pressurised escape training (PET) for submariners in February 2009 the challenge to training staff at the Submarine Escape Training Tank in Gosport has been to make things realistic while minimising the physical risk.

Staff involved with SMERAS (SubMarine Escape, Rescue, Abandonment and Survivability training) have been working hard at developing new ideas to give submariners a feeling for both the mechanics of an escape from a crippled boat, and the kind of apprehension and fear that might affect the way they perform – at least until they are familiar with the principles.

In management speak, they are seeking to maintain an increased stress dynamic.

Until recently this was partly achieved during 'rush escape' training, which covered the old technique of flooding up the compartment of a submarine until the pressure is equalised, then escaping through a hatch – there was little control possible with rush escapes, and the teaching of the techniques ended last December.

By that stage PET was just a memory – though a vivid one; it is this form of escape training that most readily springs to mind when referring to the SETT, with submariners simulating an escape from as deep as 30 metres, rising to the surface under hyperbaric pressure

By developing an old disused training tower the SETT has devised a wet, unpressurised, two-man escape tower simulator, similar in size to the Logistics Escape Tower (LET) which is found on both Vanguard and Astute-class submarines.

The new trainer is called the Wet Escape Training Tower (WETT), and it enables personnel to go through the escape process all the way to the point of pressurisation.



● *FOST(DN) Capt Paul Halton and Cdr Nick Meredith, Commanding Officer RN Submarine School), prepare to go through WETT training*

The trainee will dress in an escape suit and experience the dynamics of climbing into the tower with his escapee companion – including the claustrophobic conditions this can cause – plugging into his air supply and the flooding of the tower.

On completion of the flood process the escapees climb up out of the tower and continue their sea survival training in the water at the tank top.

The new system now has the FOST seal of approval as both Flag Officer Sea Training Rear Admiral Chris Snow and FOST (Director (North)) Capt Paul Halton have completed a training run through the WETT.

Rear Admiral Snow said: "This facility significantly improves the training we can offer submariners in escape.

"It is imaginative, and goes a long way towards the ultimate training solution I want which includes a wet experience, computer-based training, and onboard tuition.

"The SETT team are to be congratulated on the solution they have found to the issue of wet submarine escape training."

Capt Halton added: "The WETT is a fantastic, innovative and cost-effective training solution which has made a significant improvement in training."

Looking further into the future, in line with the Submarine Centre of Specialisation policy, SMERAS training is expected to move from the SETT to Faslane by 2015.

The intention is to develop the WETT concept on the Clyde, giving trainees the ability to undergo training in both single and two-man escape tower simulators, matching those escape towers currently used in operational submarines.

However, escape is the final option for submariners who find themselves in a disabled submarine, and future training will develop all concepts.

Options available to submariners in a disabled boat are, in order of priority:

- If able to surface: Surface Abandonment;
- If disabled on the sea bed: Rescue, using a rescue submersible Escape.

The concept of surface abandonment considers situations where remaining with a surfaced but disabled submarine is not judged to be safe, and all submariners undergo training in sea survival in their escape suits and, if required to leave their submarine on the surface, will have an acceptable degree of knowledge on how to survive.

However, it is recognised that aspects of this could be improved, and options to achieve this are being actively considered.

In terms of rescue, the RN has operated an independent submarine rescue system for over 25 years, and in recent years has collaborated with France and Norway to develop and commission a new air-mobile system.

This jointly-owned NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS), is based in Scotland and is available to conduct rescue operations anywhere in the world, using combinations of aircraft and ships to rapidly move a combination of assets to the scene of the accident and recover survivors.

The whole training and systems package should give submariners the confidence that, should the worst happen, the capability of their SMERAS equipment on board, the rescue assets, the Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG – divers who parachute into the water from aircraft to assist in rescues) and the wider SMERAS training given remain the best that can be achieved.

SMERAS policy is periodically reviewed by the Royal Navy to ensure it remains at the cutting edge, and one such review has just started and it is expected to report to the Navy Board in the coming summer.



● *FOST (DN) Capt Paul Halton prepares to enter the WETT tower*

Pictures: POMA(SM) Andy Leonard

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Picture: AB 'Hutch' Hutchinson

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher



● *Clockwise from above: AB James Parson, LS Craig Furber and AB Nick Naylor meet Elmo in Central Park;* ● *HMS Gloucester returns to Portsmouth at the end of her deployment;* ● *ETWEs Matthew Johns and Jonny Hairsine at the base of the Statue of Liberty on Liberty Island, New York City;* ● *LCh Colin Buchan, Ch Michael Green, Ch James Wright and Ch Nick Hartley on the Manhattan waterfront at sunset;* ● *A Typhoon from No. 1435 Flight RAF, based at Mount Pleasant Airfield, flies past HMS Gloucester as she leaves the Falklands for the last time;* ● *Chefs and a steward from HMS Gloucester attract attention in Central Park;* ● *LS Simon Wright, LS Nick Summers and AB Max Grosse with two members of New York's Finest – the New York Police Department – on Broadway;* ● *HMS Gloucester departs Pier 88, adjacent to the USS Intrepid, close to the heart of Manhattan;* ● *The Duchess of Gloucester was on the jetty to help welcome HMS Gloucester back to Portsmouth;* ● *(Middle of page): LStd Martyn McEvely approves of the view over Central Park to the north from the Top of the Rock at the Rockefeller Center*

Picture: Lt Cdr Eleanor Webb



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher



NYC greets



BUZZED by fighter jets, stopped by the police, and the end of an active Service life.

Viewed in those terms, the last leg of HMS Gloucester's final deployment could have been viewed with some misgivings.

But the ship's company of the veteran destroyer would see things rather differently – and garner a great deal of pride from these and other memories of their ship's final days.

Take the fighter jets, for example.

They were, needless to say, friendly forces – two Typhoons, based with No. 1435 Flight RAF in the Falklands, which had worked closely with the air-defence warship, gave a brief, spectacular display over Gloucester as she sailed from Mare Harbour.

After constant exercising with and against each other for the previous months, it was a gesture that the Fighting G very much appreciated.

Lt Cdr Mark Hammon, the Anti-Air Warfare Officer, said: "We have tested the limits together and done some really good tactical development, as well as making some firm friends in the back-briefs afterwards.

"They wanted to come and say goodbye, particularly because this is Gloucester's final deployment, and it was a fantastic way to close that particular chapter on the Falklands for us."

So began the long haul north for the Type 42 – but there were one or two highlights still to be enjoyed along the way.

She put into Miami, and then set a course for the Big Apple – which is where the long arm of the law put in an appearance.

Once alongside at Pier 88 in the heart of Manhattan, there was the usual requirement for the ship to earn its keep with official visits, luncheon parties for VIPs and business people and support to the British Consulate, in the case of New York it took the form of a large-scale reception, all, of course, executed with the usual Gloucester flair.

However, the real defence diplomacy was being conducted ashore by Gloucester's ship's company.

There surely cannot be a city in the world to compare with New York for matelot-friendliness.

With the 'rig run' authorised, dire warnings issued about the consequences of losing caps, and $100,000 exchanged at cheque-cashing, Gloucester's sailors hit the town – and the town opened its arms to welcome them.

AB(Sea) Max Grosse said: "It was absolutely awesome.

"Normally, you'd be scared if you got stopped by a copper with a gun, but here it turned out they just wanted their photo taken with you."

One group of stokers accidentally found themselves in a parallel universe when they wandered into legendary jewellers Tiffany and Co and were incorporated into a professional photo-shoot, complete with stunning catwalk models.

Gloucester's ship's company covered the length and breadth of Manhattan to take in all the sights.

AB(CIS) James 'Brum' Parsons said: "I think I did everything in just two days. My feet were threaders.

"I walked everywhere because there's so much to see – but then I didn't have to queue anywhere, because when anyone saw you in uniform, they just waved you straight to the front."

LStd Martyn 'Mac' McEvely said: "It was probably the best stop I have ever had. The New Yorkers were really friendly.

"They absolutely loved my beard, as they'd never seen a sailor with a beard before.

"It started a lot of conversations – in fact it was a focal point for foreign relations.

"Unfortunately for the Government though, my daughter

Picture: LS 'Jelly' Fish





s Fighting G



has now decided that it has to come off before I get home...”

Executive Warrant Officer WO Gav Dunkey said: “The Falklands seems ages ago, but the time has gone massively quickly.

“Everyone was looking forward to the US, which definitely lived up to expectations.

“Even before that, I think we really knew that we were heading homewards when we hauled the tropicals out the bottom of the locker to cross back over the Equator.

“We may not have worn them for long, but we knew it meant going in the right direction.”

Commanding Officer Cdr David George said: “New York was the best possible swansong for this fabulous ship.

“We’ve worked hard and been away for seven long months.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better final visit, or for a happier, more relaxed ship’s company at the end of it.”

And the end of it came on a bright spring morning in Portsmouth, watched by an enthusiastic gathering of families and friends, with a royal guest on board.

As the ship’s sponsor the Duchess of Gloucester launched the ship in November 1982 and has been closely involved ever since, seeing her through 15 captains, two rededications and 25 years of commissioned service.

The Duchess joined the destroyer at sea by helicopter in order to meet the ship’s company and Cdr George.

She also presented Cdr George with the 2010 Fleet Efficiency Award as his command was deemed the most effective destroyer last year, attaining the highest standards in both training and on operations.

This was the ship’s final homecoming, as she is due to be decommissioned from the Fleet next month.

And all things considered her South Atlantic deployment allows her to bow out on a high.

She left Hampshire in mid-August last year and almost immediately was called into action, assisting the Cape Verde authorities with a multi-million pound drugs bust off the west coast of Africa.

The Fighting G intercepted a yacht which was found to be carrying cocaine with an estimated value of £4 million.

Since then Gloucester’s activities have covered a wide spectrum of typical Royal Navy tasks, from conducting photographic conservation surveys for the British Antarctic Survey in South Georgia to representing the UK at the Expo Naval trade fair in Valparaiso, Chile, an international exhibition of defence technology.

The majority of her time was spent patrolling the Falklands, where she exercised with the Army and the RAF’s Typhoon fighter aircraft to hone her air-defence capabilities and skills at working in a tri-Service environment.

Another priority for HMS Gloucester was policing and protecting the waters around the various South Atlantic islands to deliver security and reassurance to those people living there.

The islands are 250 miles from mainland South America at their nearest point and so are dependent on the surrounding seas for their livelihood.

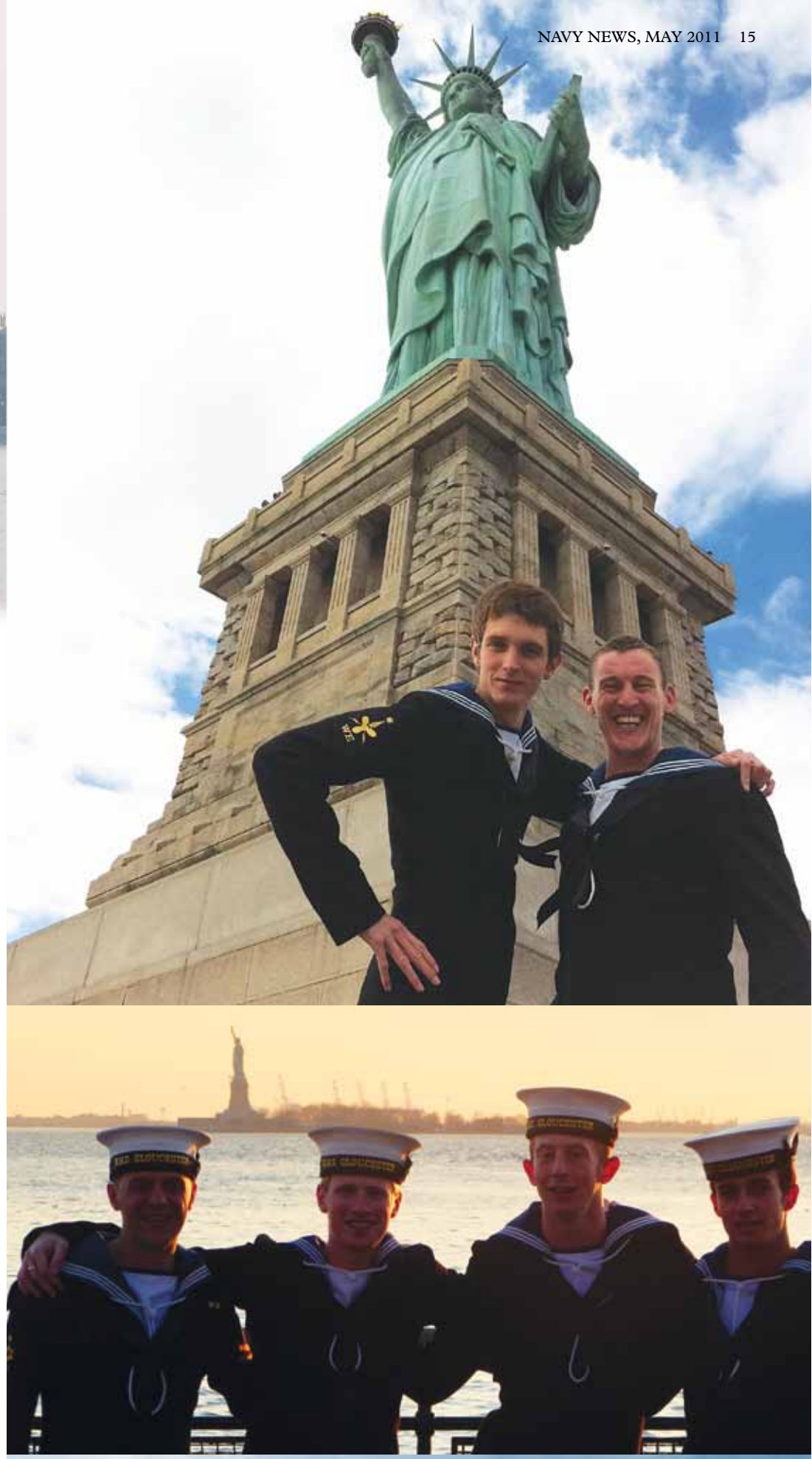
As Gloucester sailed east on the final leg home, Cdr George said: “Her Royal Highness and our families will see HMS Gloucester returning in fine fettle after a hugely successful deployment down South.

“It has been a long time away from home, however.

“Working hard has kept us occupied, and there have been lots of highlights, but we are now just looking forward to seeing our loved ones again.

“Their support has been immense throughout the deployment.

“I am very proud that the Duchess will be able to join us, as it conveys to both the sailors and the families how valued they and their Service are.”



Picture: Lt Cdr Eleanor Webb



Picture: Ch ‘Shiner’ Wright







● *45 Commando's Colours are raised for the first time at Nad-e-Ali and (left) First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope watches medics deal with a 'casualty' in a final exercise before deploying*

'This is no easy task...'

AND so once more the baton passes to the Royal Marines.

The Globe and Laurel once again billows above the sands of Helmand.

In Camp Bastion.

At Nad-e-Ali.

The Colours of 45 Commando fly proudly over Forward Operating Base Shawqat from where the Arbroath-based marines will direct the operations of Combined Force Nad-e Ali South until September.

Their banner was hoisted after that of 1 Royal Irish was lowered in an official ceremony to transfer from the outgoing unit to the new arrivals – a ceremony played out across Helmand as 3 Commando Brigade took charge of Operation Herrick 14.

The green berets were given a week to acclimatise to life – and above all the weather and altitude – in Helmand.

The night before 45's Colours were raised at FOB Shawqat, Alied forces hosted a dinner for members of the local Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police and the District Governor of Nad-e-Ali South, Habbibula Khan – who supplied the traditional Afghan food that was eaten.

The dinner served as a welcome for the incoming green berets – and a thank you to the outgoing soldiers as Mr Khan described the recent improvements to security and praised the contribution and sacrifice made by the 1 Royal Irish Battle Group.

"This is an area of great progress and presents a real opportunity for 45 Commando to make a difference for the better," said Lt Col Oliver Lee, 45 Cdo's Commanding Officer.

"Our predecessors have done a first-class job, provided us with a tight handover and therefore set us up for success. The rest is up to us and I know that we are equal to the challenge."

Fifteen miles to the north in Camp Bastion – the hub of British operations in Afghanistan, carved out of the desert outside the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah – overall command of the British mission in the country was invested in 3 Cdo Bde's Commanding Officer, Brig Ed Davis, who took over the reins from Brig James Chiswell, Commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade in a short ceremony.

The Royal Marine praised the soldiers for the "tangible progress" they had made since last October and promised his diverse force – aside from 30, 42 and 45 Cdos and the Commando Logistic Regiment and supporting commando Army engineers and gunners, the brigade comprises several Army infantry battalions, engineers and explosive ordnance experts – would do its utmost to build on those gains.

"We appreciate it is no easy task. There will continue to be tough fighting this summer as we consolidate gains and help facilitate the spread of governance to more towns and villages," Brig Davis stressed.

"However, I am confident that our excellent training has prepared us for the challenge that lies ahead."

In all, 6,500 British personnel from the three Services are committed in Task Force Helmand – roughly half of them Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

In the coming weeks and months, the brigade will come to rely upon helicopters for supplies, movements, surveillance and overhead cover.

And with the Royal Marines deployed *en masse*, it is only right there's a sizeable Royal Navy presence in the skies of Helmand.

One in five British helicopters in Afghanistan is Royal Navy – particular pertinent now that 3 Commando Brigade are in charge of operations on land.

More than 120 Fleet Air Arm ground and aircrew are committed at Camp Bastion with elements of 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons (Jungly Sea Kings), 847 NAS (Lynx Mk9A) and 854 NAS (Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings – or Baggers thanks to the distinctive black sack which contains the helicopter's state-of-the-art radar).

The surveillance version of the trusty Sea King, the Mk7 ASaC, has just completed two years at Camp Bastion.

With no threat in the Afghan skies, the Baggers are not being used for their original role – to track enemy aircraft threatening the Fleet (not least because there's not much of a Fleet 450 miles from the sea...) – but are searching for the 'presence of the abnormal', namely insurgent movements.

The Mk7's Searchwater Radar has been switched to 'Ground Movement Target Indication' mode to track activity down below – and feed real-time data back to operations and intelligence staff directing the Coalition effort in Helmand.

The Lynx of 847 can finally support the Allied mission in the summer as well as the winter. The engines on the Mk7 (the helicopter's easily identifiable thanks to its skids) couldn't cope with the heat of the Helmand summer... whereas the newer Mk9A (with wheels not skids for an undercarriage) can.

The Yeovilton-based squadron has recently converted to the Mk9A which, apart from enhanced engines features a 7.62mm longer-range and more accurate machine-gun (instead of the old .5 calibre) and an MX15 surveillance camera.

The Lynx provide 'top cover' for convoys ferrying supplies around Helmand as well as reconnaissance and close air support for ground troops.

As for the Junglies, they're coming up to three and a half years continually in theatre for now with their souped-up Mk4+ Sea Kings (improved engines and special rotor blades *inter alia*). The workhorses operate mainly by night, ferrying troops and equipment around the various outlying bases and strongpoints and evacuating casualties when needed.

The latter will be treated by the Joint Force Medical Group, which deployed *en masse* late last month.

Before heading to Helmand, more than 300 medical and logistical personnel from all three Services, drawn from 61 units – both regulars and reservists – converged on the Army Medical Services Training Centre at Strensall, near York, for a week-long final exercise before deploying.

That exercise saw three days of bespoke training followed by a three-day dynamic test in a similar working environment to that of Helmand – minus the heat and dust which Yorkshire cannot replicate in April (or any other month for that matter...).

The trial – a final validation to determine whether the group is ready for the rigours of the front line – was played out in real time and witnessed everything medics will have to do in Helmand.

That meant the Medical Emergency Response Teams treating a casualty at the scene of an incident, surgeons conducting operations in theatres and the biomedical scientists sorting out the blood for any transfers.

Once the 'operations' had been completed and the 'patients' were coming round, ward nurses conducted the aftercare and the Aero Medical Evacuation Team and Critical Care Air Support Team Processed Personnel sorted out flying the casualties from the field hospital back to the UK for further specialist treatment and rehabilitation – exactly as it's played out for real.

As well as the Britons being put through their paces, there were also military medics from the Estonian Armed Forces. A surgical team from the Baltic nation, plus 46 personnel from the US Navy Medical Corps, are deploying to Afghanistan as part of the medical group.

The final day of the exercise was witnessed by Britain's senior sailor, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, plus the Director of the RN Medical Service, Surg Cdre Noel Bevan.



● *A Lynx Mk9A of 847 NAS leads a Jungly Sea King of 845 NAS and a Bagger from 854 NAS over the bleak Helmand terrain*

Pictures: LA(Phots) Alex Cave, 854 NAS, Andy Laidlaw (45 Cdo) and Ben Sutton, FRPU North

PACS(CAT) Britannica

LAST autumn we featured a 'turbo-boosted' landing craft – the Pacscat, possessing all the carrying capacity of today's largest craft... but at speeds potentially above 30kts, not the usual eight. Six months on, C/Sgt David Young of 11 (ATT) Squadron RM, based at Instow, provides an update on the craft's progress.

"THE shape of landing craft has not really changed much since World War 2. Despite making significant technical and design changes over the years, the speed of the craft remains relatively slow.

It has taken a revolutionary hull design to change that. The Partly Air-Cushioned Supported CATamaran (PACSCAT), a sort of hybrid hover craft/catamaran has been developed to address the speed shortcomings of current operational craft. It's one of two contenders to replace the Landing Craft Utility as part of the future landing craft programme.

The Pacscat trial is the culmination of more than ten years' research by industry and the MOD to find a hull form that would satisfy the requirement of a landing craft of the future – replicating the carrying capabilities of the present-day LCU, but at speeds that would allow tactical tempo to be achieved in the assault from over the horizon.

The hull form of Pacscat was identified as a potential contender and a 1:3 scale model was built and tested at Instow in 2001. After analysing the results it was decided to develop a full-scale technical demonstrator.

The high-speed, all aluminum Pacscat is about the same size as an LCU and has an approximate loaded weight of 175 tonnes. It is propelled by twin water jets, driven by high-speed diesel engines.

It's undergoing trials with Craft Wing at Instow to demonstrate its practical utility, the advantages – and limitations – of this novel hull form, as well as proving its ability to operate from an assault ship.

For the latter, it joined HMS Albion with five Vikings, a batch of young officers and 107 Recruit Troop and headed to the West Coast of Scotland to conduct Exercise Wet Raider.

That proved to be an excellent trials period. Pacscat provided significant hydrodynamic data and completed more than 25 docking evolutions, including a number with a full payload of Vikings. In addition to this we proved the stability of the craft within the dock, by successfully embarking 6 Assault Squadron RM's beach recovery vehicle.

Uncharacteristically for the West coast of Scotland in September the weather was fantastic, excellent for sightseeing and seal spotting... not so good for trialling Pacscat in slightly more challenging sea states.

When Albion returned to Plymouth, the Pacscat moved round to RM Turnchapel.

Due to inclement weather conditions, the trials continued – but it needed some juggling around. In particular redirecting a Challenger Main Battle Tank to arrive in Devonport, no mean feat to move a tank through the dockyard at the best of times, let alone through an anti-nuclear demonstration!

Without too many complications the tank was loaded on to Pacscat, where it remained embarked for a week of hydrodynamic trials; again this proved to be a successful trial period.

The craft recorded a speed of 19kts with the Challenger 2 embarked – very impressive and unprecedented, a new world record for UK landing craft!

Craft Wing hosted a visitors day and Plymouth Sound proved to be an excellent backdrop to show off the Pacscat potential. The VIPs were provided with an ideal viewing platform in the shape of a liberty boat, care of Plymouth Dockyard.

They witnessed the craft operating at high speeds – 25kts – and were fortunate enough to see it operate alongside the Swedish CB90; giving everyone a brief insight into what the future of amphibious operations might look like.

The future landing craft programme will also see the introduction of the Force Protection Craft as a replacement for the Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel.

A deep 'v' monohull shape is the desired hullform, and one craft that might fit the bill is the CB90, currently operated by the Swedish Marine Corps, as well as the US Marines among others.

This craft is capable of moving around the battle space at speeds up to 40 Knots, The CB90 is crewed by three and can carry 18 dismounted troops making her a versatile craft.

On the back of the Swedish Marines and the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps partnership, Craft Wing was tasked to see if a specially-modified CB90 would fit on to the davits of a UK assault ship (in this case HMS Albion).

Again this trial proved to be a success with the CB90 being hoisted on to the ship. Lifts were conducted in benign conditions and further design work is required to improve safety of the crew, as ever crucial lessons have been learned and passed up to Navy Command HQ.

As for Pacscat, it's now back at Instow and her trials have concluded with surf drills – determining whether its hull can take the battering it will get in that environment.

With the craft's trials now complete, Craft Wing is shifting its attention to the CB90.

During the summer term we will be putting two craft through their paces at RM Instow to see if they measure up to the exacting demands of the future."

Picture: Greg Barrott, 11 (ATT) Sqn, RM Instow







Picture: PO(Phot) Gaz Armes



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins

‘We hav soft a



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



Picture: PO(Phot) Gaz Armes

● *This page, from top: A Japanese P-3 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft flies over HMS Cornwall; Sgt Luke puts Royals from 40 Cdo through pistol drill on RFA Argus; HMS Cornwall in the Indian Ocean; Royals from HMS Cornwall secure a pirate dhow; RFA Argus takes on stores from RFA Fort Victoria*

Versatile Argus hunts pirates

ROYAL Fleet Auxiliary Argus is proving her adaptability by performing three distinct roles in little over a month of her latest deployment.

Nominally an aviation training ship, Argus also has a key role as a casualty receiving vessel or humanitarian support ship.

And she is proving quite adept in a third role as a counter-piracy platform.

The quick-change sequence started at the end of February when Argus, positioned off the South Coast of England, was conducting Merlin helicopter training.

But with operations to evacuate Britons from Libya getting under way, she was ordered alongside at Portland Harbour to pick up supplies before heading to North Africa.

Within a week she was off the Libyan coast, ready to evacuate British and other nationals if needed.

She remained in support of the operation for ten days until it became clear that no further people were being rescued by sea.

Released from the operation, Argus headed for Cyprus where she took on further stores and provisions, and a new team joined her.

The men and women of 824 Naval Air Squadron, a training unit which had been embarked, were relieved by their colleagues from 820 NAS – the same helicopters remained on board, but this time to be flown by the Navy’s frontline maritime surveillance squadron.

A detachment from the Royal Marines Fleet Protection Group (FPGRM) returned home after deployments through the Middle East, and was replaced by troops from B Coy, 40 Cdo Royal Marines.

With preparations completed Argus was ordered to head through the Suez Canal for her next tasking – tackling the piracy menace in the Gulf of Aden.

With the good weather that comes between the monsoon seasons piracy tends to increase, so Argus with her three Merlin helicopters and surveillance capabilities is ideal to support the multinational operation – intelligence is a key factor in thwarting attacks.

Argus has now been on patrol in the Gulf of Aden, providing a reassuring sight to merchant ships and a deterrent to potential pirates, for several weeks.

Capt Paul Kehoe RFA, the Commanding Officer of Argus, said: “We have been able to quickly and successfully adapt to each new tasking.”

“It has been very satisfying to see all the hard training pay off and I’m very impressed and pleased with the way my team have integrated and adapted for each new role.”

Meanwhile the Royal Navy frigate at the heart of counter-piracy operations off Somalia for the past few months has handed over the baton and was due home in Devonport, six months after sailing, as *Navy News* went to press.

And HMS Cornwall ended her final operational deployment with praise ringing in the ears of her ship’s company.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar joined the Fighting 99 in Aqaba, Jordan, where he was discussing regional issues as well as finding out more about the frigate’s activities.

She had spent four months as flagship of Combined Task Force 151, the principal naval group charged with dealing with piracy.

From Cornwall, Pakistan’s Cdre Abdul Aleem and his multinational staff choreographed the movements of numerous warships and auxiliaries across more than a million square miles of ocean, and the ship herself was involved in rescues, escort duties and deflecting pirate attacks.

Cdre Aleem and his staff departed in Djibouti, and the senior officer declared himself happy with his time on board, and that the ship’s company had supported his team to his “utmost satisfaction”, while Cornwall herself was a “fine Royal Navy platform, manned by a highly professional and competent body of brave men and women.”

BLOW them out of the water, no questions asked.

Set them adrift on the high seas with no fuel, food or water.

There are many ‘solutions’ put forward by commentators to the scourge of piracy which is blighting the international shipping lanes off the Horn of Africa.

There are just as many fallacies – fallacies which inevitably lead to questions about the Royal Navy’s role and effectiveness in those dangerous waters.

Yet there is no doubt that the presence of warships is effective.

Although captured merchantmen tend to make the headlines, only one in every ten thousand vessels plying their trade in the Indian Ocean are taken by brigands.

And amongst that number will be ships and pleasure craft which have not taken heed of widely-promulgated advice over routes and communications which would dramatically cut the risk of them becoming a victim.

Put another way, more than 23,000 vessels transit the Gulf of Aden every year – which does not include vessels in the wider Somali Basin or western Indian Ocean – yet just 32 vessels of various sizes are currently being held to ransom by pirates.

The campaign against piracy is a complex affair, being undertaken by dozens of sovereign states, some acting unilaterally, others in formal coalitions, and all accountable to international maritime law and conventions.

Step outside the law and you run the risk of descending to the level of the gun-toting seaborne thugs who target vulnerable ships.

Those laws provide the current framework within which the various military forces must work – politicians determine the task and policy, and the troops on the ground (or sailors on the water) translate the policy into plans which they put into action.

But there are some very simple facts which can be gleaned from the events being played out on a sprawling ‘battleground’ of 2.2 million square miles of ocean – around 60 per cent of the area of the United States, or 20 times the size of the UK.

First, piracy is an international problem which needs an international solution.

“No one nation or one navy can solve the problem alone,” said Cdre Tim Fraser, Commander UK Maritime Component Commander and Deputy Commander of the Combined Maritime Forces.

“The response is very much an effort of the international community, shipping industry and military to fight this scourge.

“Within this international framework, the UK and the Royal Navy is rightly making a significant contribution.”

Some 25 nations are involved in counter-piracy operations under the Combined Maritime Forces banner, which requires considerable effort to co-ordinate



Picture: PO(Phot) Gaz Armes

ve not gone nd fluffy...'

forces and squeeze the maximum use out of limited assets – at any one time an average of 25 warships are on patrol, with maritime reconnaissance aircraft also playing a part.

The pressure on freebooters is increased by the other forces which are also playing their part in keeping sea lanes open, be they flying the colours of NATO, the European Union or any of the other nations represented in these waters.

And it is paying dividends, according to Cdre Fraser.

"Although the number of attempted attacks by pirates continues to increase, they are more frequently being disrupted.

"Working together, and with the co-operation of the seafarers they protect, the multinational naval forces in the region are making a difference."

There is also an acceptance that the maritime effort can only tackle the symptoms of piracy – to cure the malaise itself requires major changes ashore in Somalia, because only when good governance is established will the social and economic drivers behind piracy be removed.

And that, it is generally agreed, will not happen in the next few weeks or even months.

So much for the strategy, the broad brush-strokes behind the anti-piracy campaign. Let's deal with the real gripes.

Perhaps the biggest bone of contention is the handling of individual incidents and the subsequent release of suspected pirates, which has garnered indignant headlines in the popular press and sparked legion comments in forums, often spluttering furiously about what should be done with these 'scumbags' if the Navy was not so soft.

Again, the reality is somewhat different – and the consequences of a heavy-handed or 'hang 'em high' approach would ultimately be detrimental.

A captured pirate needs to be fed and watered, with religious stipulations taken into account.

"And we would be morally bankrupt if we did not offer medical aid to anyone who needs it, in accordance with the Hague Conventions," said Cdr Gerry Northwood, former head of operations for the EU's anti-piracy taskforce – Operation Atalanta – and now part of the Navy's Directorate Media and Communications News.

"When captured by the Royal Navy, the pirates are not held in luxury accommodation and treated like royalty.

"We have not gone 'soft and fluffy'.

"But they are rightly held in accordance with UK law.

"We treat them with basic human dignity, and there is no doubt that we make a positive impression on them.

"Each pirate captured leaves us knowing that hostages – or prisoners, in their case – must be treated with dignity, and that beating or hurting the crew of merchant ships is not the way to behave."

Neither is the decision on whether or not to arrest and prosecute a suspected pirate an open-or-shut case, as many an armchair commentator would like to think.

"British law rightly requires that we have a solid evidence trail before we can successfully proecute a suspected pirate," said Cdr Northwood.

"Like it or not, a pirate is only a pirate if he is onboard a merchant vessel trying to capture it.

"The rest are maritime muggers and unless they have hurt someone, locking them up will achieve little.

"Secondly, prison is not a deterrent as it holds no fear for them."

There is also a belief that, as in so many criminal enterprises, locking up the foot-soldiers does not impact on the activities of their bosses, the gangsters who run the piracy operations while remaining firmly and safely onshore.

As it is, 49 pirates have been convicted in Kenya since the summer of 2008, with another 60 currently going through the legal process.

A further 11 have been convicted in the Seychelles, 800 miles off the coast of Somalia, but which has also suffered the effects of piracy.

The way to curb piracy at sea is not to threaten dire consequences to the men in skiffs or mother-ships far out to sea, but to make it an unattractive proposition, according to Cdr Northwood.

"Our current policy is to disrupt the pirate gangs," he said.

"The pirates HMS Cornwall captured recently were landed back in Somalia 600 miles from their homes with the price of a bus fare in their pockets.

"This is not about a failure of British law or nerve, it is simply pragmatic.

"In 1693, in the so-called Golden Age of Piracy, the pirates did not stop because they feared the hangman's noose.

"They stopped because it was not profitable to go to sea – every time they did they met a naval vessel or the merchantman prevented them boarding.

"The more responsible shipping companies protect their ships and co-operate with the international maritime forces dedicated to protecting them, including Royal Navy and RFA vessels.

"Yet there is a significant minority of merchant shipping owners who do not, and it is their ships which are especially vulnerable to capture.

"Only 0.01 per cent of ships in the Indian Ocean are captured by pirates, so they are tempted to take a chance."

Another – often overlooked – key weapon in the good guys' armoury is intelligence.

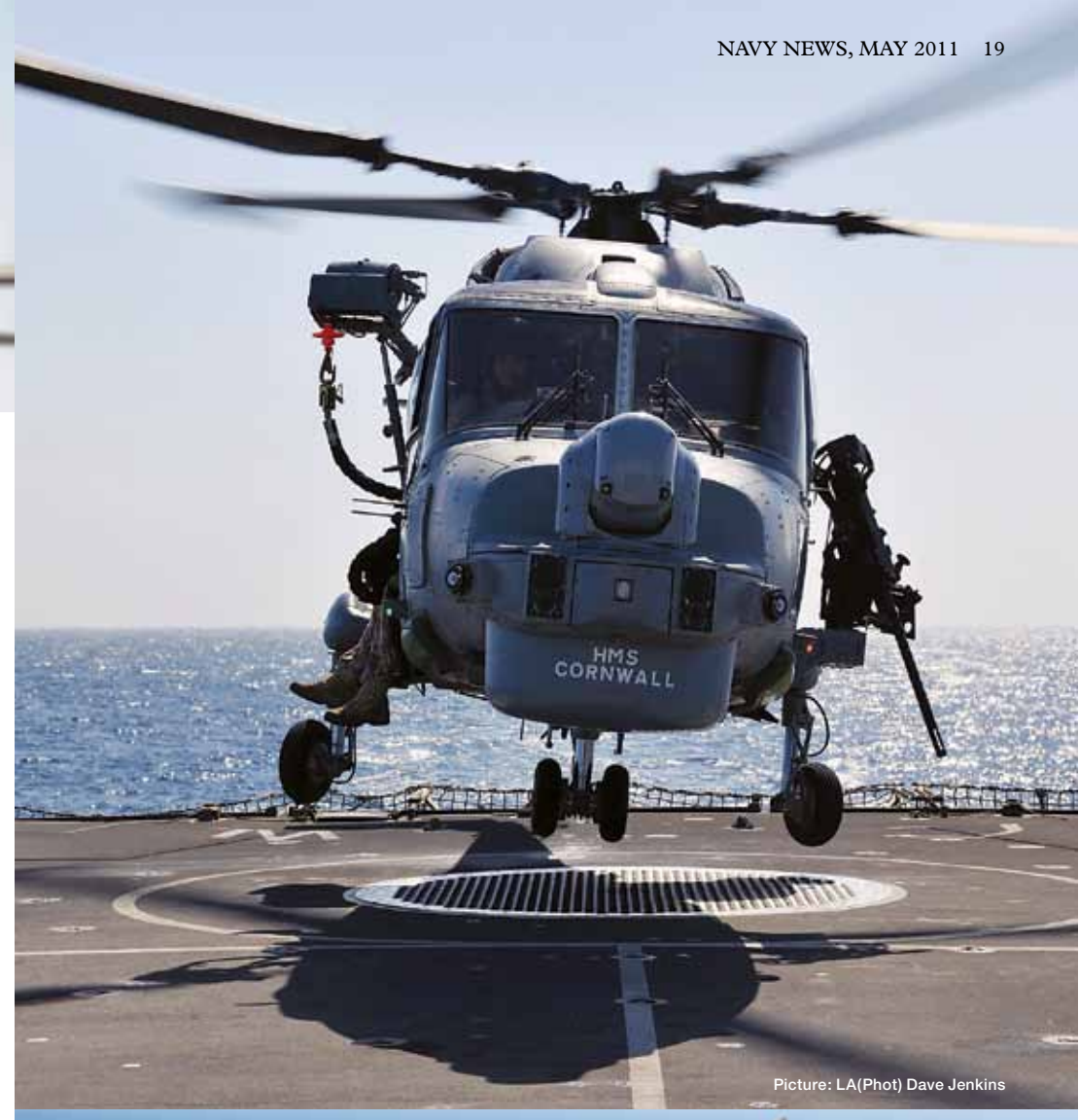
Royal Navy warships transitting the apparently-empty oceans are not simply going from A to B.

For example, as soon as HMS Cornwall left Devonport, or HMS Richmond left Portsmouth, *en route* for the seas off the Horn of Africa, the ship's sensors were gathering data about vessel movements, adding to the general maritime picture.

By gathering reams of statistics, standard patterns of shipping emerge, making it all the easier to spot the rogues, the arms and drug-smugglers, the people-traffickers and the potential pirates in areas like the Gulf of Aden and the Somali Basin.

"While it is a reality that 2.2 million square miles is a large area to patrol, Cornwall did not happen to bump into the Somali pirates they found in the mother ship," said Cdr Northwood.

"They knew where to look, positioned the ship accordingly and caught their quarry."



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins

Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins



● *This page, from top: Merlin helicopter embarkation training on board RFA Argus; HMS Cornwall's Lynx takes off; a sailor mans HMS Cornwall's Minigun during ship protection exercises; Royal Marines from HMS Cornwall tag weapons by torchlight that were found on a pirates' dhow; a boarding team from HMS Cornwall secures and searches a pirates' dhow; HMS Cornwall meets up with HMS Richmond in the International Recognised Transit Corridor (IRTC), a heavily-patrolled sea lane through pirate-infested waters between Somalia and Yemen; (inset) a member of HMS Cornwall's RN boarding team practises rapid roping*



Hardcore action at Culdrose

BEFORE you turn all Mary Whitehouse, specialist engineering equipment and operators are re-layingthe runway at Culdrose in a time-critical operation…

…and in the foreground a Merlin from 824 Naval Air Squadron – the training unit for all who fly and maintain the £40m helicopter – prepares to carry out a winching drill with a stretcher (and a rather healthy casualty on the evidence of PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow's photograph).

All 6,006ft (1.13 miles or, if you prefer new money, 1,830 metres) of the Cornish air station's runway is being re-laid over the coming two months with contractors working 14-hour and, on occasions, 19-hour days.

The hardcore and surface of the runway are being replaced; the latter has to be laid quickly before it hardens in the trucks which are delivering it to the site from St Columb Major, near Newquay.

By the time the builders are finished in early June, some 30,000 tons of asphalt will have been put down as part of the £8m revamp.

Although fixed-wing operations have either been postponed (observer training resumes with the new King Airs in the summer) or transferred to Yeovilton (the FRADU Hawks used for air defence exercises off Plymouth), not so helicopter flying.

Aside from the round-the-clock search and rescue duty performed by 771 NAS, training by the Afghanistan-bound Bagger crews in the Sea King ASaC community, and lots of Merlin magic (sorry) courtesy of 814, 824 and 829 squadrons.

The resurfacing work is the latest stage of a massive facelift for the Cornish base which has seen new hangars built to meet the needs of existing and future helicopters (notably the next-generation Merlin), revamps of the Sea King and Merlin simulators and new accommodation blocks (most recently the wardroom).

■ THROUGHOUT the spring and summer Culdrose personnel will be giving regular talks to the public on their jobs at the air station.

A mix of engineers, aircrew, air traffic controllers and meteorological officers and ratings will be on hand at the public viewing area and neighbouring Merlin café, on the eastern edge of the airfield.

The 30-minute talks will take place on the first and third Thursdays of May, June, July, September and October at 11.15am (large chunks of the RN, including Culdrose, disappear on leave in August).

With spring now upon us (according to the calendar at least...) the café is open every weekday until the end of October from 9.30am-5pm (4pm on Fridays).

It's from here that guided tours of the sprawling air station are also hosted at 1.30pm from Monday through Thursday (excluding bank holidays).

For more details contact the café on 01326 565085.



Picture: Martin-Baker Aircraft Company Ltd

No fear of ejection...

PORSCHE 911? Aston Martin Vantage? Dodge Viper? Corvette?

Pah, we laugh at your pathetic rate of acceleration.

This is the moment a pilot 'punches out' of the cockpit of an F35 Lightning II – the Navy's next-generation fighter-bomber – strapped on to a rocket.

0 to *600* (in true videprinter fashion, we'll spell that out, S I X H U N D R E D) in under four seconds.

This is the moment a 'crash test dummy' ejects from a mock up of the business end of the supersonic stealth fighter as its ejection seat completes its rigorous trials.

And if you think the rate of acceleration on the 'jet car' – racing down a specialist track at Chalgrove Airfield near Oxford – is impressive, between the pilot pulling the ejection handle and him/her dangling beneath a parachute takes just three seconds.

The ejector seat, fitted to a full-scale cockpit and nose of the fighter, has undergone more than 30 tests in the USA, France and UK courtesy of Martin-Baker, the firm synonymous with saving lives. More than 7,000 aircrew from over 90 air forces owe their lives to the company's ejector seats over the past half century.

In the case of the F35, which will be the punch of the Fleet Air Arm, RAF, US Air Force and US Marine Corps when it enters service later this decade, some 3,000 of these seats will be required.

They have undergone rigorous testing – 900,000 measurements are recorded per second by sensors during the trial ejections – before receiving the thumbs up from the F35 team.

The final trial ejection was witnessed by an impressed Rick Whittaker, test manager for BAE Systems which is overseeing Britain's involvement in the Anglo-American jet.

"Ejecting from an aircraft like the F35 typically takes no more than three seconds from the ejection handle being pulled to the pilot being on a parachute – you can imagine how quickly everything happens. I'm pleased to say the systems performed really well," said Mr Whittaker.

As for the Lightning II itself, the first naval variant – the F35C – is undergoing evaluation at the US Navy's trials school at Pax River, near Washington, where an RN team is already on the ground and getting to grips with technology two generations ahead of the Harrier the new jet replaces.

You can watch a video of the ejector seat test here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alz5z9VoLJU

Last Lynx leaves its Mark



ORDINARILY we wouldn't get too excited by the sight of a Lynx and a warship.

But this is no ordinary Lynx. This is the last Mk3 to ever touch the deck of one of Her Majesty's warships – in this instance, HMS Ocean.

After more than 30 years' service the trusty Mk3 has completed its final operational flight – an uneventful (which is how we like our flights) 35-minute hop from the helicopter carrier in the Channel to the home of the Lynx, RNAS Yeovilton.

The aircraft – tail number XZ693 – shared the flight deck of Britain's biggest warship with Apaches, Merlins, Sea Kings, Chinooks, Dauphins and the newer Mk8 Lynx.

The final embarkation of a Mk3 came almost 40 years to the day that the very first Lynx took to the skies at the Westland works in Yeovilton.

After nearly a decade's trials and tests, the Mk3 entered service with the Fleet Air Arm. Over the past few years, however, the trusty helicopter has increasingly been replaced in the front line by the Mk8 Saturn.

Inwardly and outwardly the variants are noticeably different: the Mk3 has a smooth nose, while the Mk8's is packed with sensors and kit while the older Lynx's cockpit is more 'analogue', the Mk8's is a digital extravaganza.

Despite the last embarkation of a Mk3 on a warship, don't write the venerable aircraft off just yet. There are still four in service with 702 Naval Air Squadron, the Lynx training unit.

"The Lynx is a great aircraft with a worldwide reputation and the Mark 3 has been a tremendous servant to the Royal Navy," enthused Ocean's Commanding Officer Capt Keith Blount. "Everything that is good about the Lynx is going to be carried forward in the Wildcat which is why that programme is going to be so exciting."

Cdr Mike Ryan, Commanding Officer of the Lynx Helicopter Force, said the Fleet Air Arm could "look back with considerable pride at the Mk3's many operational achievements over thirty years of valuable service".

Picture: LA(Phot) Guy Pool, HMS Ocean

Mast observation for Bristol

SHINIER, cooler and, er, lower.

Veteran destroyer HMS Bristol is towed into Portsmouth Harbour after a £4m refit on Tyneside – looking rather different from the vessel hauled north in October.

The more observant *Navy News* readers will notice she's missing one main mast and forward radar; they were removed while in the hands of the A&P yard at Hebburn – the structures were becoming unsafe and weren't needed for Bristol's role as an accommodation ship.

The trip to Tyneside – where the ship was built more than 40 years ago at the Swan Hunter yard, directly opposite the A&P works – was Bristol's first major move in 17 years since she took up her role as the training and accommodation ship in Portsmouth Harbour, replacing the old HMS Kent.

As well as removing the mast, some 100 shipwrights, including a handful who helped build her in the late 60s, gave her a fresh lick of paint all over (hence the shinier), replaced some of her wooden decking and restored many of her wooden ladders on the upper deck, and fitted a heating and air-conditioning system throughout the destroyer (hence the cooler… although hopefully warmer in winter too).

The A&P team refurbished living spaces – there are nearly 500 bunks on board used by upwards of 17,000 sailors and Sea Cadets annually – built a 60-seat lecture theatre and installed a CCTV system to improve safety and security on board.

All in all, the overhaul will extend the destroyer's life by up to a decade.

"We are delighted to have Bristol back in Portsmouth," said CO Lt Cdr Naomi Storey.

"She has been given a new lease of life as a result of this refit and the whole ship's company are keen to get her up and running so that the Service personnel and youth organisations can get back on board to make use of our wonderful new facilities."

A small crowd, including photographers and TV camera crews, watched Bristol's return. Once rigging and a few stores have been removed, the ship was returned to her berth at the foot of Whale Island and will be ready for use once more from May 9.

The ship is Britain's sole Type 82 destroyer, one of four planned to safeguard a fleet of new aircraft carriers which was cancelled in the mid-60s. The rest of the 82s were also cancelled, but the government pressed ahead with Bristol, which went on to become a trials ship for the then-new Sea Dart missile system and served as a command ship.

After service in the Falklands in 1982 she became the training vessel for Dartmouth before finally decommissioning in 1991. Three years later she took up her current role, crewed by 31 Service and a dozen civilian personnel.



Picture: LA(Phot) Terry Boughton, FRPU East

Walking from Wembley to Welsh warbling

THREE Royal Navy sailors – PO Andy 'Gibbo' Gibbs, PO 'Buster' Brown, and WO2 Dave Chandler – have walked from Wembley to Cardiff in aid of Help for Heroes.

They walked 166 miles in six days, carrying with them the match ball for the Wales versus England football match on March 26.

The trio, based respectively at NATO HQ Northwood, MWS Collingwood, and SFM at Portsmouth Naval Base, were waved farewell from Wembley by Nancy Dell'Olio, Peta Todd and Maurice Chambers.

Although the rain gods did provide an inauspicious start on the first day, the weather was kind to them for the rest of the walk with the lads clad in T-shirts and shorts in the sunshine.

By the end of the six days, rattling the collecting bucket along the route, the lads arrived in Cardiff with £10,000 in the net.

Some of the England players left the training pitch to take photographs with the Naval lads.

Viewers of the big match might well have spotted the trio in their uniform where, after a live interview with Sky Sports News, they headed out onto the ground to present the ball to the referee and to stand with Miss Wales as she sang the national anthems.

The team are just short of their fundraising goal of £15,000 – help bolster their total online by visiting www.bmycharity.com/wembleytocardiff2011

Matelot runs the Thames

CPO(CT) John Gormley and his brother will be following the course of the Thames Path in three days for the Royal British Legion. As this is a distance of 184 miles it will be no meander...

The Thames Path runs from the river's source in Gloucester to the Thames Barrier.

The duo intend to cover an average of 62 miles per day, carrying all their own equipment, finishing at the Thames Barrier as this month's *Navy News* goes on sale.

John, currently based up at RAF Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire, has found it a little difficult to link in with the Navy community from his Harrogate base – so pledge your support online at http://www.justgiving.com/thamespath184.

In memory of Kyle

ON July 7 at the Victory Club in HMS Nelson there will be a champagne and chocolate ball in memory of marine engineer ETME Kyle Bartlett who was killed in a drunken fight in May 2009.

His family are aiming to raise awareness of the One Punch Can Kill campaign, and to take a presentation to local schools and youth organisations to educate people about the consequences of alcohol-induced fights.

Tickets cost £15 for the evening's entertainment, which will run into the small hours and features a chocolate fountain, fortune teller, live music, disco and buffet.

Visit kbmf.co.uk for more details, email info@kbmf.co.uk or call 07518 583 251. Tickets are also on sale at the Victory Club.

Marathon machismo



THE London Marathon took place as *Navy News* went to press, and among the runners were Sgt Carl Creasey RM who was determined to attempt a world record carrying a 60lb pack. Carl (*left*) was running for Seafarers UK, and can be sponsored on www.justgiving.com/carl-creasey. Two members (*right*) of HMS Gannet were also running: Lt Phil Gamble for the British Heart Foundation: www.virginmoneygiving.com/teamhumphries and Lt Graham Humphries for Teenage Cancer Trust: www.justgiving.com/phillip-gamble.





Red nose ribaldry

AS a cheerful farewell to its former home of 750 Naval Air Squadron, one of the Jetstreams bid a good-hearted goodbye by donning a red nose in aid of Comic Relief.

The men and women of 750 NAS in Culdrose (*pictured top by PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow*) were not the only ones brightening up the day.

Members of 824 NAS (*right LA(Phot) Dave Sterratt*) sold red noses and 'pick a pose' posters, raising over £400.

At Temeraire, the Navy's Physical Trainers decided to go for an energetic solution for 'doing something funny for Comic Relief'.

So nine service and former PTIs plus an officer, able rate, and an ex-charge chief for flavour, (*pictured right*) clambered to the heights of the 5m high dive board and began jumping.

They split one mile into 322 bite-size drops of 5m, divided it by the nine jumpers, then let them loose on the high dive board.

So 36 times each man plunged into the waters, all colourfully dressed in fancy dress themes.

It took only 50 minutes to complete the one mile of jumping; either due to the high fitness levels of the group or more likely due to the 'no fear' attitude shown.

Early jumps were somewhat sedate, however organiser PO Lee Herron commented: "The jumps soon escalated into elaborate dismounts, gone was the measly step off and in came the back somersaults, flying dives, and on a few occasions a couple of belly flops from misjudged flips and spins."

The Temeraire jumpers managed to raise £208.50 for Comic Relief.

Staff at the Medical Centre in HMS Collingwood, in Fareham, were treated by a red-nosed ladybird...

Rikki Chamberlain (*pictured right with his staff and a somewhat worried looking patient*), the lead medical adminstrator, clad himself in his distinctive outfit to help people both here in the UK and throughout Africa.

In just a few hours the ladybird and his team managed to raise £230 for the Red Nose charity.









RNBT makes May's day

THE RNBT has helped make the day of their eldest resident who celebrates her birthday this month.

Mrs May Harbour (*pictured above*) celebrates her 102nd birthday on the first of May.

As a girl, May attended the Royal Marines Cadet School in her hometown of Chatham, as her father was a serving Royal Marine.

May joined the Women's Royal Naval Service in 1940 as a Writer and was assigned to Admiralty House working for Commander-in-Chief the Nore – Admiral of the Fleet Sir John Tovey.

She was employed on office administrative duties and when asked about her experiences during training, May laughed and said: "Training, there was no training, we were thrown in at the deep end right from the start!"

At the end of her wartime service, May was awarded the British Empire Medal along with the War Medal 1939-45 and the Defence Medal.

May had kept her un-mounted medals in a wooden keepsake box.



● *Mrs May Harbour in her youth and her newly-mounted medals*

While researching her life story as part of celebrating her 102nd birthday, the medals came to light and Corinne Day, the RNBT's Events and Publicity Officer, had them mounted as a small present from the Trust – only 66 years after they were first awarded...

May left the WRNS after the war and remained in Chatham, as she was married to a Royal Marine sergeant. They had one son David, who later served as an artificer in the Royal Navy.



● *The China Fleet Country Club committee celebrate its 20 years*

Celebrate 20 years with the China Fleet Club

The China Fleet Country Club on the banks of the River Tamar in Saltash has completed the first stage of a major upgrade and improvement programme as it prepares to celebrate 20 years in its current location.

As a registered charity, the club's automatic beneficiaries are all serving non-commissioned RN and RM ranks and their immediate families. The club was founded over a century ago in Hong Kong and relocated to its current location prior to the handover of Hong Kong in 1997.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary the club will be holding an anniversary party for members and beneficiaries on Saturday June 4. Tickets for the party are available through committee representatives or directly from the club.

This will be followed by a public Open Day on Sunday June 5. The club will also host an Armed Forces Day Celebration on June 19 2011.

WO(MAA) Alex Sharpe, the current chair of the committee, said: "This is an exciting time for the club with some major upgrades and improvements already undertaken and more planned for the year ahead.

"We believe that in these uncertain economic times and increasingly high operational tempo, it is important that we continue to offer our beneficiaries not only real value for money but the very best in high quality holiday and leisure facilities."

Jackanory, Jack tells a story

STORYBOOK Waves is a free service that allows parents in the Navy to record their child's favourite story.

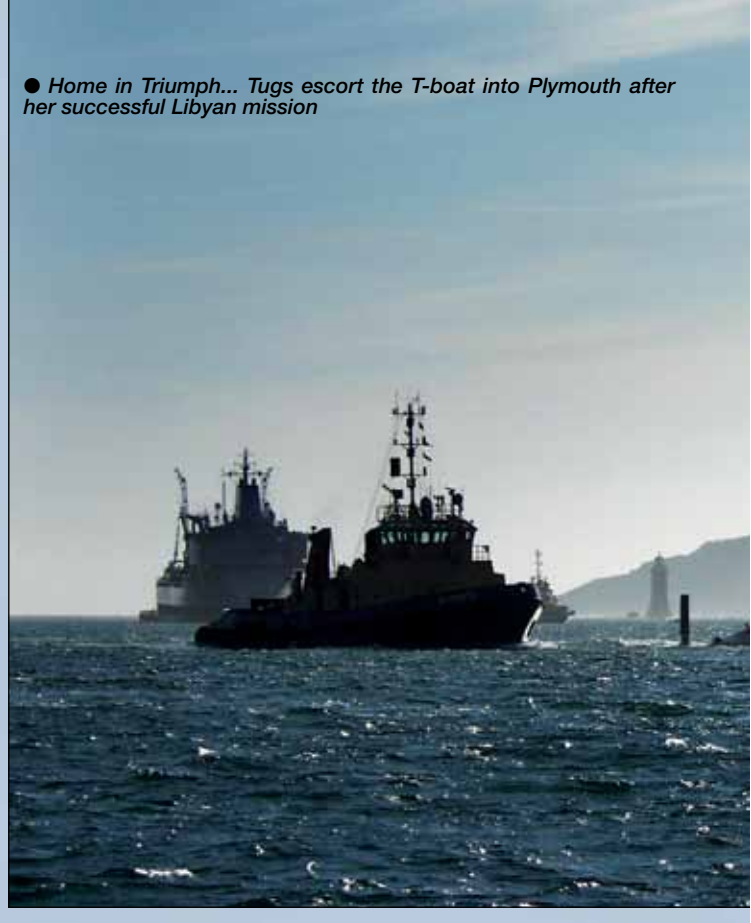
This means that the child can listen to bedtime stories from their parents while they are away on operations.

This scheme is run locally on several sites, but relies on goodwill – so if anyone out there is able to put some time in to help with the recordings, it would be much appreciated.

If you want to record a story, or would like to offer your help to spread the service to as many people as possible, please contact AB Holly Foxcroft on 9380 24470.



● *'Bowing out in style'... A triumphant final entry to Plymouth for HMS Cumberland*



● *Home in Triumph... Tugs escort the T-boat into Plymouth after her successful Libyan mission*

From the Strait of Hormuz

NOW that's what we call a welcome.

Two tugs squirting jets of water with their fire hoses, a Lynx flypast, one police launch, one RIB.

What you can't hear is the gun salute echoing around Plymouth Sound, or for that matter the cheers of hundreds of people a couple of miles away on a jetty in Devonport Naval Base.

And all for **HMS Cumberland**.

The Fighting Sausage is one of three warships to complete their missions off Libya and return home safely...

...while three more Royal Navy warships have taken their place to keep the regime of Colonel Gaddafi under the knout.

For Cumberland it is 'truly mission completed'. When she sailed into Devonport on Saturday April 16, she brought the curtain down on a proud 22-year career after arguably the most varied deployment by any British warship in the past couple of decades.

That deployment will be remembered mostly for the Libyan crisis.

Cumberland was the first and last British warship into Benghazi and the UK's biggest contributor to the rescue of civilians: 454 people, including 129 Britons, owe their safety to the Type 22 frigate.

Few of her ship's company could have imagined such a mission, however, when the ship departed Devonport on a misty late September morning.

Cumberland was dispatched to the Gulf to relieve HMS Somerset on the long-standing duty of protecting Iraq's oil platforms and shipping in the wider Gulf area, and working with friendly nations in the region.

All of which F85 did in spades. Cumberland:

- guarded the Iraqi Al Basra Oil Platform in the Northern Arabian Gulf
- took part in Exercise Air Khandjar with the UAE's Navy and Air Force
- exercised with the Saudi Arabian Navy
- patrolled the Central and Southern Arabian Gulf securing sea lanes and deterring smugglers and maritime crime
- passed through the gateway to the Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, eight times escorting high value shipping or other military units
- provided support to France's flagship FS Charles de Gaulle while she conducted combat air operations into Afghanistan over Christmas
- supported the state visit of the Queen to Abu Dhabi
- hosted the new Ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, Sheikh Saud bin Saqr, in the first such visit since his accession
- conducted counter-piracy patrols in the Gulfs of Aden and Oman

And that was all before the turn of the year…

Cumberland was returning home to decommission – she was axed along with all three of her sisters under last year's Defence Review – when she received instructions to stand by off Libya.

It was an order which ultimately delayed her homecoming by a month…

…but it also thrust the ship and her men and women into the international spotlight for days on end.

The first of the three evacuations the ship carried out from Benghazi, which was in rebel hands, was by far the most dramatic. Cumberland sailed into harbour to a faint soundtrack of gunfire and explosions as rebel and government forces clashed in the distance.

And just hours later she sailed out of harbour and into a storm which left many of the evacuees aboard seasick.

The ship's medical officer, Surg Lt Alex Shaw, and his team worked round the clock to ensure they were properly cared for, while shipmates entertained children and changed nappies because their parents were too ill to do so themselves.

After disembarking the civilians in Malta, the ship refuelled and sailed again for Benghazi within seven hours.

Once the evacuation mission was complete, Cumberland remained in the Gulf of Sirte with HMS Westminster to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973, preventing arms reaching Col Gaddafi's forces by sea and stopping his warships bombarding civilians in rebel-held areas.

That mission only ended when HMS Liverpool arrived in the Med to relieve the Fighting Sausage.

And so to home and 1,000 or so loved ones on the jetty. If there was happiness as families were reunited, then there was sadness too at the passing of a fine ship.

"This is a day of excitement to mark the end of a successful deployment and for everyone to be reunited with their families," said the frigate's final commanding officer, Capt Steve Dainton.

"But it is tinged with sadness because this is the final time the ship with an illustrious past will fly the White Ensign sailing into her base-port."

He continued. "Cumberland's final deployment has shown just how useful a warship like her can be. It is fitting that a ship that has served her country so well for over 20 years has bowed out in such style.

"It is, of course, her crew that make Cumberland what she is: they have performed exceptionally throughout the deployment but especially when called upon to assist with the evacuation of personnel from Benghazi.

"The Libyan operation showed them at their best: professional; determined and compassionate. I am very proud of them."

Having flown her decommissioning pennant on entry to Plymouth, Cumberland will sail no more. She will formally decommission on June 23.

CUMBERLAND'S place in the line of some 18 warships spread across the Gulf of Sirte under the banner of NATO's Operation Unified Protector was taken by **HMS Liverpool**, who promptly halted a cargo of trucks reaching the shores of Tripoli.

The Portsmouth based destroyer intercepted the MV

Striking at the heart of Gaddafi's war machine



THIS is what the Allied air campaign is doing to Gaddafi's war machine.

Three hundred miles from the sea a bunker complex on the edge of the city of Sebha smoulders, the ground pockmarked by craters after it's been pummelled by missile strikes.

This is among the first intelligence imagery released by the Ministry of Defence showing the effects of the co-ordinated naval and air attacks to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973.

The images show a complex (clearly visible on Google Earth at 27°3'50.90"N, 14°27'15.18"E) of around 40 underground bunkers which were home to small arms and artillery ammunition.

On March 24, in her third salvo of cruise missile strikes, submarine HMS Triumph – in conjunction with US forces – launched Tomahawks at Libyan air defences around Sebha.

The city's airport, five miles south of the bunker complex for example, is home to two squadrons of MiG-25 'Foxbat' fighters – aged but incredibly fast jets.

Having neutralised the air defences, a long-range strike by Tornados from RAF Marham followed four nights later.

The bombers launched Storm Shadow missiles at bunkers on the north-west part of the site, destroying them – and their contents.

Together with attacks by other Allied aircraft, all 40 ammunition bunkers were obliterated – although the blasts were mostly contained within the complex.

"With highly targeted strikes like this we are hitting Gaddafi's forces where it hurts, limiting their supply lines and in turn reducing their capability to kill their own civilians," Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox said.



pictures: po(phot) angie pearce, frpu west, po(phot) sean clee, rnpoty x 2, and la(phot) dan hooper, frpu west





● *The Jolly Roger proudly flies on HMS Triumph as Cdr Rob Dunn – in a submariner's trademark jumper – directs the boat's entry into Devonport*

to the shores of Tripoli...

Setubal Express, bound for Tripoli from Malta, and sent her boarding team of Royal Marines and sailors aboard.

There, after a thorough search of the 13,000-ton ferry, they found trucks which could be used by the Gaddafi regime. They also found the Setubal Express' manifest did not tally.

As a result of the destroyer's inspection, NATO chiefs ordered the ferry not to proceed to Libya, but put into Salerno in Italy.

In Liverpool's case, that mission includes directing the Allied aerial mission over Libya enforcing the no-fly zone – including working with Coalition F/A18 jets, refuelling tankers and maritime patrol aircraft on surveillance missions.

The destroyer also escorted a refugee ship leaving the beleaguered city of Misrata, scene of the most protracted and bitter fighting of the Libyan civil war.

The civilian populace are not the only ones in harm's way. Liverpool's ops room team have "routinely" identified attempts by coastal batteries and radar sites ashore to track the Type 42 as she steamed just outside Libyan waters.

All of which has meant the ship being 'closed down' at action stations almost constantly given the threats she has faced.

That, said Liverpool's Commanding Officer Cdr Colin Williams, was "keeping the team's concentration focussed".

He continued: "I'm immensely proud of my ship's company for the way they have dealt with the challenges they have faced so far.

"HMS Liverpool is protecting the civilian population of Libya by enforcing the no-fly zone and the maritime embargo, showing the value of maritime forces and the skill of the Royal Navy. We are doing a really good job."

The destroyer was due to accompany the Cougar 11 amphibious task group to the Mediterranean and east of Suez.

Instead she sailed early and was sent to relieve HMS Cumberland, which returned to Devonport on Saturday.

Cdr Williams said when chatting with his men and women in the veteran destroyer's mess decks he'd been impressed by their understanding of the ship's role in the bigger picture of the Libyan mission.

Liverpool is joined on Unified Protector by **HMS Brocklesby** which has broken off normal duties with a NATO minehunting force to support the international mission, plus vessels from seven other nations (Belgium, Canada, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Spain,and Turkey) patrolling the Gulf of Sirte.

Beneath the surface of the Mediterranean HMS Turbulent remains on stand-by to conduct Tomahawk cruise missile strikes against the Libyan Government's military machine should they be needed. So far, they have not.

UNLIKE the boat Turbulent replaced off Libya, **HMS Triumph**.

She returned to Devonport with the Jolly Roger – the submariner's traditional battle ensign – flying... and six small tomahawk axes upon it.

Triumph fired the very first shots of Britain's involvement in the international effort to curb government forces in Libya under UN Security Council Resolution 1973, targeting military objectives far inside Libya.

After the initial launches – around 7pm on Saturday March 19 – the boat subsequently paved the way for a successful RAF bombing raid on an underground ammunition dump at Sebha (see the inset article).

That was the T-boat's final strike. She was relieved by her sister Turbulent and returned to Devonport having spent the entire period on Operation Ellamy – the British codename for the mission to enforce the UN resolution – undetected by land, sea or air forces.

Triumph's Cdr Rob Dunn praised the actions and resolve of his 120-plus crew.

"They went about their duty and carried out all I asked of them in the most professional way," he added. "They are naturally satisfied that they carried out an operational tasking using our Tomahawk missiles – which does not happen very often – but for which they are highly trained and prepared at any time.

"This was a short-notice mission for which Triumph and her ship's company were perfectly ready in terms of their training and the boat being at the peak of combat readiness and at sea.

"We received our orders and made at high speed to our location to carry out our duty as only the unique capabilities of a Royal Navy submarine can do."

It's the first time the Jolly Roger has been flown since operations against Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. The tradition dates back to the opening days of World War 1 and legendary submarine pioneer Max Horton who ordered his men to craft the flag after a successful mission – a snub to dead hands at the Admiralty who considered submariners as little better than pirates.

IF THERE was something of a fanfare surrounding Cumberland and Triumph's returns, not so that by **HMS Westminster** – a rather low-key affair in Portsmouth (indeed the only family on the jetty was that of her executive officer...).

The Type 23 frigate was dispatched at short notice to the Med (breaking off a hometown visit to London in the process) to support embargo operations and keep the Libyan Navy holed up in port.

Before the United Nations Resolution was adopted, the ship observed Gaddafi's forces merciless attacks – and was powerless to intervene.

"We saw first hand the Libyan regime's use of force against the population," said Commanding Officer Cdr Tim Green. We tracked the planes and saw the explosions. Gaddafi's Navy was shelling Libyan cities. Once the resolution was passed I had the authority to take action to stop this from happening.

"Our presence, along with other UK forces and coalition partners, was a genuine deterrent.

"There is no doubt our presence in the area has saved the lives of Libyan people."

The month-long spell of Libya was, said ET(WE) Paul Smith, "a chance to play your part in history.

"Things like this don't come around often – I wouldn't have minded staying a bit longer."

And that's something you rarely hear from Jack...



● *HMS Westminster's Merlin manoeuvres away from the frigate to begin a sweep of the Gulf of Sirte*





Landing rod

WITH bangs, crashes, the drift of green and white smoke and a flurry of craft buzzing around the Hamoaze, budding Royal Marines landing craft commanders and crew face their final test.

A 14-week course teaching green berets the art of operating large and medium landing craft as well as ORC gunboats and small rubber assault craft reached its climax with a beach assault on the edge of Plymouth Naval Base.

Over an hour-long exercise the commandos demonstrate all they have learned in the hands of 10 Squadron from the RM Landing Craft Specialisation Training School from beach surveying and putting a small reconnaissance team ashore to landing two dozen marines, trucks, BV tracked vehicles and a 52-ton armoured monster.

The Corps has three classes of landing craftsmen (LCs) – 3, 2, 1:

third-class drive ORCs and small boats;

second-class are in charge of medium-sized LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel) craft, aided by LC3s serving as crewmen;

and first-class, in charge of the large 'roll-on, roll-off' LCU (Landing Craft Utility) craft and small flotillas.

For this final hour-long exercise all levels and abilities of landing craftsmen are tested and the full panoply of RM raiding forces are placed at the disposal of the non-commissioned officer being assessed on his ability to command as an LC1.

Sgt James Johnson has spent a decade in the landing craft fraternity.

"I have a love for boats, but I didn't want the naval lifestyle, so this is a great mix," he says.

In the coming minutes he will call upon all his experience and knowledge.

He was given his challenge for the final exercise barely 12 hours before he was due to run it and spent half the night devising it before briefing his men. And when the time came for action, the NCO was expected to provide a running commentary for assessors, guests and the media watching proceedings.

Compère isn't, of course, part of the job description...

... but it provides the watching media with a very useful explanation of the carefully choreographed chaos played out on the Hamoaze and Wilson's Beach, a 'charming' stretch of coast between Frigate Alley and Bull Point.

At low tide the beach is perhaps 250ft long and 100 or so wide; the waters recede to reveal mud and rocks and a single-lane natural slipway ideal for offloading vehicles from a landing craft.

And at high tide, like today, there's little beach, a few rocks, and that slipway.

These are all factors that Sgt Johnson had to consider when planning today's assault.

He's also pored over satellite imagery of the beach – but there's nothing to beat solid evidence.

So the invasion of Wilson's Beach begins with a rubber boat almost silently approaching the shore. Two commandos jump out and move inland to probe enemy defences, while the coxswain leaps into the water and stands by his craft, his SA80 at the ready.

Another rubber boat now closes in on the beach to take the readings necessary to determine whether it can take LCVPs and LCUs.

It quickly sweeps along the shoreline, a crewman holding a small gadget over the side: a rapid beach profile which, er, provides a rapid profile of the beach – depth, gradient, any hidden obstacles.

Meanwhile on land World War 3's broken out. There's bangs and snaps, the sound of hundreds of firecrackers (simulating enemy fire) exploding: the recce party has run into the enemy.

The pair set off green smoke signals then retire to the beach where their boat is still waiting for them.

With acrid green fumes drifting along the water's edge, it's the signal for the cavalry.

A medium-sized landing craft moves in shepherded by a couple of ORCs, while two more of the raiding craft stand guard further offshore.

A couple of dozen cammed-up Royals leap out of the LCVP and race up the beach. Smoke, crack of rifle fire, lots of testosterone, more smoke. Basically World War 3, Part 2.

Johnny Foreigner evidently

pictures: la(phot) dan hooper, frpu west





g
3m only

doesn't take too kindly to a bunch of Royal Marines invading his beach and charges into the Hamoaze in a couple of speedboats determined to cause havoc.

For a couple of minutes ORCs and RIBs dance merrily on the water. Smoke, crack of rifle fire, lots of testosterone, more smoke, before Johnny Foreigner gives up and slinks back to shore licking his wounds.

Ashore the assault force has pushed beyond the very attractive barbed wire fence which seals off the beach and is grappling with the enemy on an equally-attractive dusty patch of ground in front of a couple of sheds.

That's sufficient shore captured for Sgt Jameson to unleash the big guns: his heavy armour courtesy of the LCU.

First off is the BEAST – Beach-Equipped Armoured Support (Tracked) – a cumbersome acronym for a rather cumbersome, er, beast: the 52-ton beach recovery vehicle.

It's off first so that if anything rolling off the craft blocks the slipway, it can shove them out of the way (it can also push the landing craft off the beach should they become stuck).

This is exactly what Capt Trevor Smith, 10 Squadron's training officer is looking for.

"You have to put the right craft on the beach in the right order," he explains.

Indeed. It's no good offloading the field kitchen first if what you want is armour to secure a beachhead. You want your battle wagons ashore initially, the baggage train later.

And so, with the rather pungent smell of smoke canisters filling the air, the battle of Wilson's Beach is over.

Don't worry if you missed it, though. There'll be two more this year.

The Poole-based squadron runs three courses every year for around 25 budding landing craftsmen each time.

"There is a lot to learn on the course, it is hard work, you are tested constantly, but it's also enjoyable," says Sgt Johnson.

Which is exactly what Maj Jim Fuller, Officer Commanding 10 Training Squadron, wants to hear.

The course is demanding – but (a) we're dealing with war and (b) we're dealing with Royal Marines.

In addition to the Plymouth exercise areas and 10 Squadron's home at Poole, the trainees also make use of the quieter waters of the Falklands where they were able to conduct some live firing – the ORC raiding craft are equipped with heavy machine-guns and the sparsely-populated expanses of the islands allow particularly realistic training.

And by picking the best volunteers and helping the men through, 19 in every 20 students pass.

"What you need to be a landing craftsman is intelligence, you need to understand navigation and complex issues such as the rules of the road, but you also need a healthy dose of common sense," Maj Fuller explains.

"In some cases we're taking a 19-year-old lad who's done one or maybe two tours of Afghanistan and now we're asking them to drive a 30kt boat, at night, on their own. That's demanding.

"The last exercise is quite intense, pretty full on. Here they're expected to show everything they have learned."

Capt Smith adds: "We're looking for knowledge. You don't 'just' need to be a Royal Marine. You need to be a seaman, an engineer, a navigator, a planner. You have to able to live and work on your own."

It's not just the men driving and organising the boats being assessed here, however.

The men leaping out of the boats and up the beach are almost green berets – cadets from CTCRM at Lympstone in the final stages of their training. Their performance here today will count towards the commandos' most coveted possession.

There are vehicles here from HMS Bulwark and the Commando Helicopter Force.

"When we're looking to run an exercise, we see who and what's out there. You have to make the best use of it," Capt Smith says.

For the CTCRM trainees it's back to Lympstone for the final stages of their training, including the infamous 30-miler.

For the successful landing craftsmen, by the time you read this they'll be serving with the RN's three assault ships, the specialist 539 Assault Squadron RM, or Fleet Protection Group RM whose ORCs safeguard the arrival and departure of Britain's strategic missile submarines on the Clyde.

COMMENT

Surely that's not Shoulton's early history?



● *The early years of our mystery ship HMS Shoulton have sparked some debate among readers of* Navy News *who recall her conversion at an earlier date*

I BELIEVE the ship in Mystery Picture 191 (January) was HMS Shoulton, M1182, laid down in 1953, completed in 1955 and converted to a minehunter and commissioned in May 1957.

She went to America under her own power, the smallest ship to cross the Atlantic since World War 2, accompanied by larger ships. On her return to the UK she had to call in to Waterford for some defect or other.

I had just completed a course in HMS Vernon and was informed I was to join her in Waterford. I asked what the set onboard was but nobody knew what a 193 set was and had never heard of it.

I left Vernon and caught the train to London, on arrival at the ticket barrier I was detained by two miltary policemen, who informed me that my ship had sailed and I was being reissued with new documents for overnight rail travel to Edinburgh.

From there I went to HMS Lochinvar. The leading seaman I was relieving was court martialled because he could not supply me with the set of tools and equipment required.

We left Lochinvar and went to Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Germany and thence to the Kattegat for mine location demonstrations, finding and marking these to be disposed of by other ships.

On the way back to the UK in Force 9 gales we were diverted to Yarmouth to locate a USAF bomber which had gone down with two bombs on board, and then waited for HMS Swin to arrive before we went home to Lochinvar and made ready for passage to the Mediterranean for demonstrations to Italy, France and Spain.

We returned to the UK in 1960 I was then drafted to HMS Cambrian for sea trials and deployed to the Far East.

– M Nicholas, Ely, Cambs

I DON'T like to disagree with *Jane's Fighting Ships* and the Ton Class Association, but HMS Shoulton was converted to a minehunter before 1963.

I served on Shoulton in 1959-60 when she was deployed to America – the smallest warship to cross the Atlantic since WW2.

We had to refuel in the Azores and Bermuda and once from an RFA tanker in mid-Atlantic.

On arrival in the USA we were based in the US Navy Amphibious base in Little Creek, Virginia, to carry out side-by-side trials with USS Bittern, USN's first minehunter.

These were carried out in various sea temperatures from Newport, Rhode Island in late autumn to Key West, Florida, the following summer.

Apart from the sophisticated ASDIC fitted for minehunting, the magnetic loop was removed and replaced by a two-berth cabin for the Chief Engine Room Artificer and the Chief Diver.

Shoulton carried a team of clearance divers for positive identification of dummy mines located by the ASDIC.

The pulse generator was also removed to allow the fitting of two Leyland generators to power the 'active rudders' – electronic motors and propellers built into their rudders to give slow speed manoeuvering whilst searching for mines.

– Derek Sheraton, ex POM(E), Harwich, Essex



More than one Cornwell

AFTER reading the article on John Travers Cornwell VC (March, p.28) I thought your readers may be interested in this photograph of John (standing, on right) with his brother Bill.

It has been said that John is the youngest recipient of the Victoria Cross. I believe that this has now been disproved as a soldier lied about his age and was only 15 years old when he volunteered for World War 1 and was later awarded the VC. Are you able to substantiate this?

– Tony Davie, RNA Woking, RMA Reading

The youngest recipient of the VC was Hospital Apprentice Andrew Fitzgibbon, Indian Medical Establishment, Taku Forts, China, on August 21 1860, aged 15 years and three months.

Jack Cornwell, the third youngest recipient, was 16 – Ed

Graveyard of so many gallant ships

SEVENTY years ago, the names of Tripoli; Benghazi, Tobruk and Sirte had painful associations for HM Forces, and Libya being so much in the news has prompted me to recall my memories of that area.

For more than two years, under various generals, British, German and Italian armies fought battles to and fro along the North African coast until the tide turned at El Alamein.

In support of the Army, Benghazi and other Libyan ports were frequently bombarded from seaward.

When the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet in 1941-42 was at its lowest numerical strength, two battles off Sirte took place. Breconshire, a naval store carrier, was involved in both.

The Second Battle of Sirte was considered one of the most brilliant actions of the war. In gale conditions, light cruisers (HMS Cleopatra was the flagship) and destroyers fought off heavy Italian units from attacking Breconshire, SS Clan Campbell, SS Pampas and SS Talabot, a Malta convoy.

Rear Admiral Vian (earlier, Vian of the Cossack) became Admiral of the Fleet Sir Richard Vian.

Among HM Ships lying on the bottom off the inhospitable coast at Tobruk are Coventry, Latona, Sikh, Zulu, Chakdina and the little gallant Yangtse River gunboats Gnat and Ladybird.

Off Tripoli lie Neptune and Kandahar. A little farther to seaward in deeper water lie Jackal, Kipling and Lively, overwhelmed by aircraft whilst attempting to intercept an enemy convoy bound for Benghazi on May 11 1941.

Jervis, the remaining destroyer, rescued all survivors, including myself (from Kipling).

Tobruk fell twice. Over long periods whilst it was a besieged garrison, it was sustained by sea, mainly with the 'Tobruk Ferry.' Ships' companies referred to the loading berth at Alexandria at the 'condemned cell'!

For all to see, around 0830, a fast minelayer and three destroyers left Alexandria on the high-speed hazardous dash, against mines, aircraft and torpedoes to Tobruk. Abdiel and Latona with 40 knots available had to restrain themselves for the destroyers to keep company.

At around midnight, on arrival at Tobruk, for about an hour, all hands frantically unloaded. At times a wreck sufficed as a jetty. Hopefully, these returning ships would be sighted on the horizon off Alexandria at about 1530.

Stores and relief troops were taken to Tobruk, troops, wounded and POWs were brought out. More than 30,000 troops were taken into and out of Tobruk on this run, besides a large amount of stores.

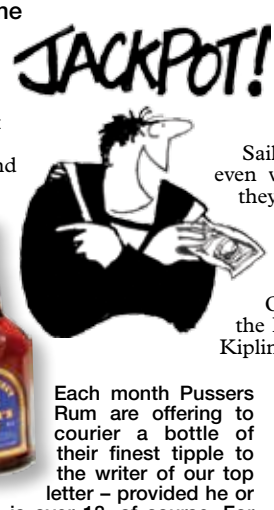
Sailors were very kind to the troops, even with the matter of rum, provided they did not take too generous a sip of an offered tot!

The garrison at Tobruk consisted of British, Australian, South African and Polish troops.

On one occasion, General Sikorsky, the Polish commander, took passage in Kipling to visit his contingent.

Sadly, soon after, Buster Crabb recovered his body from an aircraft which had plunged into the sea on take-off from Gibraltar.

– Len Chivers, Portsmouth.



Each month Pussers Rum are offering to courier a bottle of their finest tipple to the writer of our top letter – provided he or she is over 18, of course. For youngsters and teetotallers we will provide an alternative prize.

This month's winner is: Len Chivers of Portsmouth

...IN 1941 we were losing the war, with so many of our ships sunk by torpedoes and mines, bombed day and night.

Yes, it was tough! Tripoli, a great harbour and port, was used by our adversary for convoys from Italy. The whole sea area was heavily mined, unbeknown to us, when HMS Neptune, one of our cruisers, ran into one.

It exploded and put out her engines, then she drifted onto three more, then turned over with the loss of over seven hundred of the crew.

There was only one survivor, who was picked up by a small Italian boat and taken to Tripoli where he was cared for by the Italian hospital.

All this was secret and kept quiet at the time, for fear of what it might do to morale.

As a very young leading seaman, I joined HMS Boston, and with Cromer, Whitehaven and Cromarty we were rushed out early in 1942 to clear these minefields.

It's all so long ago now and I am in my 90th year. So the national news of late brings back when we did what we had to do.

Looking back, I thank all those in minesweeping ships of that time. And I thank God there were no 'elf and safety' people around, otherwise the mines would still be there!

– George Drewett, President, 1st Destroyer Association, 1942-45, Shepperton, Middlesex



● *The Goliath crane inches under the Forth Rail Bridge*

Baffled of Barking

IN TIMES of economy and unemployment, why the bloody hell buy a crane in China and ship it halfway round the world to assist with our shipbuilding industry?

We have steel works in Britain, we have mass unemployment in Britain, and if the Samson and Goliath cranes in Belfast are bigger, why not assemble the ships there, thus regenerating that area as well?

And with reference to defence cuts, in the winter the airports were closed due to snow, so I guess the same happened to the RAF bases.

The Harrier jets can operate anywhere, so why get rid of their versatility?

– Derek Brown, Barking, Essex

Signalling the end of a branch?

WITH the demise of Commcen Gibraltar (*Navy News*, January) the closure of other naval commcens, both ashore and afloat, must be inevitable.

As all signal traffic is destined for the attention of individuals, and with the development of more integrated networks and 'personal communication devices,' the requirement for commcens and comms ratings becomes somewhat superfluous.

Whilst regrettable, one cannot escape the fact that the Comms Branch will pass into Royal Navy history along with the other branches of the past, such as Sailmaker, Boom Defence and Coxswain.

– A J C Gorman, ex CRS, Ickenham, Middlesex

A forgotten Protector

WITH regard to your article about HMS Protector, (April) there was a seventh Protector post-Falklands.

The RN acquired three oil rig supply tugs for use as patrol boats, one of which was the Seaforth Saga, she became HMS Protector alongside the Guardian and Sentinel.

I'm not sure how long they served under the White Ensign, but I believe they were succeeded by the Castle-class patrol vessels.

I spent six months as the buffer on Protector (1984-85) my final sea-going draft before retiring in June 1985.

– **Ian Cox,** Maldon, Essex

opinion

PIRACY is an evil which threatens free trade, livelihoods and and international prosperity.

And while the Royal Navy and navies of many other nations are working hard to counter it, they cannot provide a cure.

The roots of piracy are problems on land, not at sea, and in the long-term the problems will not be solved until some stability returns to the failed state of Somalia.

In the meanwhile the Royal Navy can only address the symptoms and not the cause – and this it is doing, with more success than is always realised.

Nor does the Navy receive the credit it should for working, quite rightly, within the bounds of international maritime law and conventions.

Instead, commentators are to quick to criticise it for 'going soft' in its treatment of suspects and its apparent failure to take a tougher line.

In the short term, locking pirates up is no deterrent – thousands more will take their place in what can be a very lucrative business.

Meanwhile, until a solution is found, the Navy and its international partners are making a big impact off the Horn of Africa, disrupting and deterring pirate gangs with the help of increasingly sophisticated and accurate intelligence.

Deterrence, of course, rarely makes the headlines. Nor do hard, tedious and repetitive counter-piracy patrols. But these are the bedrock of the Navy's counter-piracy efforts, and they should be applauded.

The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the MOD

NAVY NEWS

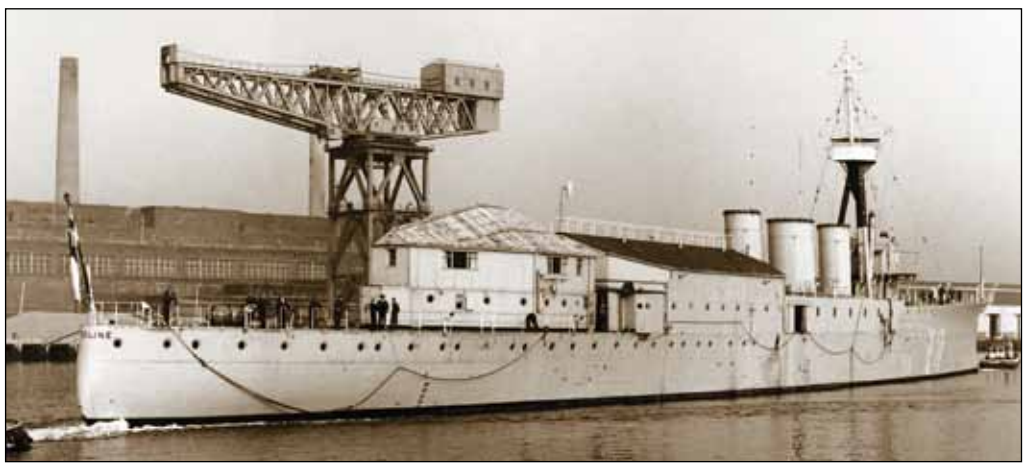
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● *HMS Caroline pictured some time in the 1940s*

Keep Caroline in Belfast

THE Ensign of HMS Caroline, the old Headquarters Ship of the Ulster Division of the Royal Naval Reserve, was laid up in a ceremony at St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast, on March 31.

The RNR is now known as HMS Hibernia and has been moved several miles inland with the Army.

It was a sad occasion for those of us who had served as instructors to the RNR during our service career. I served from June 1973 to October 1974, and enjoyed the job.

It was a very well-conducted service by the Dean of the Cathedral, attended by the Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland, Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster, and some of his staff.

HMS Caroline's future has not been decided but there are rumours that she may go to Portsmouth as it may be too expensive to keep her here in Belfast. I hope this rumour is false.

– Larry Nolan

...THE light cruiser HMS Caroline, laid down, launched and commissioned in a record time of just 44 weeks in 1914, has been alongside in Belfast since 1924.

She took part in the Battle of Jutland in 1916 and, for 85 years, served as a Royal Naval Reserve headquarters for Northern Ireland and she was an active RN HQ ship in World War 2.

Part of the National Historic Fleet collection, she is in good condition, with much of her original fittings and equipment on board. However, before she could be properly made a museum ship, the expensive removal of asbestos will be necessary.

In the current economic climate, there is concern that she could even be scrapped, for want of the money to save her for the nation.

Even if saved, there is concern that she might leave Belfast, where she has been for so long part of the maritime picture.

This grand old lady must surely be saved, cleaned up and preserved, ideally in time to mark the centenary of her launch on September 29 2014.

HMS Belfast is in London and HMS Caroline must stay in Belfast. Part of our maritime heritage, she will be a good tourist attraction, and a useful addition to the city's Titanic Quarter Signature project.

– Lt Cdr Lester May, Camden Town, London

See our story about Caroline on page 38 – Ed

Toast the Royal couple



AS WELL as a bottle of rum for May's top letter, Pusser's Rum are celebrating the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton on April 29 with a competition for our readers.

To win a commemorative ceramic Nelson Ship's Decanter (*pictured*), answer the following question:

What naval rank did the Duke of Edinburgh hold when he married Princess Elizabeth on November 20 1947?

The lucky winner will be the first correct answer drawn out of the *Navy News'* hat on June 15.

Please send your answers on a postcard to Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH. Entrants must be over 18.

Pussers have also devised a celebratory cocktail called Royal Salute to toast the Royal couple – here's how to make it:

Take 50 mls (2 fl oz) Pusser's Blue Label. Pour over ice in a tall glass. Add 25 mls (1 fl oz) ginger wine and two or three lime wedges. Stir well, top up with bitter lemon to taste and stir again.

Raise your glass, toast the happy couple, and enjoy!

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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Pictures: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh

● *Just some facets of the new entry training regime at Raleigh; the numbers correspond to the core maritime skills below*

The nine CoMmandmentS

THE Lord has ten commandments. Jack only needs nine.

Rookies arriving at HMS Raleigh on May 8 will be the first to experience a fundamental change in the way the Navy turns civvies into sailors.

Beyond being thrust into the world of Naval discipline, Naval customs and Naval ethos, men and women undergoing basic military training at the Torpoint establishment will spend ten weeks being drilled in the nine 'core maritime skills' or CMS.

It's the first step down a long road which will see officers and ratings in the Senior Service receiving common instruction in this set of basic skills. (Officers will receive their full package of CMS at BRNC Dartmouth from January following the current review of officers' initial training.)

In due course, the aim is to test sailors' proficiency in these abilities at regular intervals in the same way that personnel must pass their fitness tests.

The new regime being introduced at Raleigh mirrors the Army's Military Annual Training Tests which every soldier must complete.

In the RN's case, staff at Raleigh have spent the winter and spring devising exercises, instruction and training based on the 'nine commandments' which will be the bedrock of initial training and Service life.

There will also be a number of extended exercises – Daring Leap, Hidden Dragon, Bright Diamond (Dauntless, Defender and Duncan will obviously feel a little left out…) – which will see trainees bivvying under the stars on Dartmoor, at the Pier Cellars outdoor centre and around the Torpoint area. They will carry out various drills under military exercise conditions to put the skills they've learned to the test.

Bright Diamond will be the final test over two nights and three days, using HMS Brecon and Scraesdon Fort – a dilapidated Victorian fortification outside the village of Antony; they will be expected to sleep in makeshift shelters, carry bergens on their backs, live on ration packs and carry out navigation, sentry duties and weapons drills among other tests.

"The whole course will be a lot more intensive but also very progressive," says Cdr John Twine, Raleigh's Commander Training.

"We will demand more from the trainees but will equip them with the skills to meet the higher expectations. It will give us more robust sailors and the Fleet will be in a stronger position as a result."



● *'Fits in exactly with what we're asking sailors going into the front line to do'... Raleigh's CO Capt Steve Murdoch on the new training regime*

Over the past five years basic training at Raleigh has crept up from eight to nine weeks. The new regime will require ten.

"It's not about turning matelots into soldiers," stresses WO2 Dutchy Holland RM, whose green beret comrades will be teaching the basic combat skills (the 'first commandment').

"But you are in the military, you will go to dangerous places and you need basic combat skills."

"These are things which Royal Marines take for granted, they're our bread and butter, but it's not the same in the Navy."

"You only have to look at Libya and Cumberland going into Benghazi recently – you need sailors on the jetty to protect your ship."

Which is why his team will be teaching the basics of sentry duty, assessing a target's distance and two-man fire and manoeuvre, as well as simple survival skills such as putting up a tent or makeshift shelter, hygiene in the field and finding water.

Hand-in-hand with the new regime is a sterner attitude towards a trainee's fitness.

"If they fail the pre-joining fitness test on day two that could be the end of it," says Raleigh's Commanding Officer Capt Steve Murdoch.

"In the past those who failed the test were given seven more weeks to improve. Eighty per cent of them never did."

In short the RN was spending money on people who never made the grade. Not any more.

"Training at Raleigh is never stagnant," Capt Murdoch adds. "It moves with the demands of the Navy. This has been a top-to-tail review and it fits in exactly with what we're asking sailors who are going into the front line to do."

The nine core maritime skills at the heart of the new training regime are:

1. BASIC COMBAT SKILLS: not just weapons handling, but the ability to survive in the field;
2. FITNESS will be delivered by old-style 'Swedish PT': it's been on trial at Raleigh since late last year and staff say it's had a marked impact on the discipline and bearing of raw recruits;
3. BATTLEFIELD CASUALTY DRILLS: first aid training and the ability to deal in the immediate aftermath of a colleague being injured;
4. CBRNDC (CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL, NUCLEAR, DAMAGE CONTROL): in addition to fire-fighting and damage control, trainees will spend one and a half days fitting and testing the new general service respirator.
5. SEA SENSE AND NAVIGATION: in one of the biggest changes to introductory training, trainees will spend much more time on the water. Rather than just riding around in a RIB, they will be introduced to navigation and practical boat handling ;
6. CORE VALUES AND STANDARDS: imbuing trainees with the RN ethos and teamwork, for the first time this will also include an introduction to leadership skills;
7. OPERATIONAL LAW: recruits will spend more time learning about the laws behind war and how to act if they are called on to look after prisoners – particularly pertinent given the emphasis on counter-piracy operations east of Suez;
8. SURVIVE, EVADE, RESIST (INTERROGATION), EXTRACT TECHNIQUES: a basic introduction in what to do if you're stuck behind enemy lines;
9. COUNTER IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WORK: again especially relevant in view of the number of RN personnel on the ground in Afghanistan. Training serials will include searching for home-made bombs hidden in cars and carrying out personal searches.

Stimulation through simulation

A TOP-to-tail review of training also requires a top-to-tail review of the way trainees are taught.

Or make that a desktop-to-tail review... courtesy of the Raleigh Communications Centre, a suite of 70 computers.

Not impressed?

They rise up out of half a dozen seemingly ordinary wooden conference room desks, revealing a bank of eight or ten PCs with headphones, keyboards and mice.

This is Powerpoint for the next generation.

"You have to stimulate the senses for people to learn," stresses Lt Wayne Ffoulkes.

"In a lot of lessons in the past there was a reliance on Powerpoint."

Indeed, the *Navy News* team has endured 'death by Powerpoint' on more than one occasion – and so too have the trainees at Raleigh.

Take, for example, learning about the capabilities of the Royal Navy; here's a Type 42 destroyer, it's an air defence destroyer, it fires Sea Dart missiles, there are 240 men and women on board. Blah blah blah...

All good useful information but, "there comes a point when the students drift off into oblivion," says Wayne, "and not just the students..."

So, how do you make learning about what the Royal Navy possesses more interesting?

Why, you play 'Jackopoly' of course – a digital version of a popular board game with Mayfair, Pall Mall *et al* replaced by "Type 23 frigate", "Type 45 destroyer", "Sea King ASaC".

Roll the electronic dice and move the pieces around the board; land on a square and up pops a short video with information about the subject.

As with the civvy version of the game there are forfeits too for transgressions such as leaving your mobile phone in your pocket or failing the fitness test.

You're not going to learn the minutiae of the Fleet like this, but you will pick up the basics.

So having played Jackopoly, time to put the newly-acquired knowledge to the test with another game, such as "how would you re-take the Falklands?" (a question which RN strategists have possibly asked themselves in the wake of last year's defence review...).



"We're not looking for grand strategy, just the sort of assets the trainees would expect to be used in such an operation," Wayne explains.

"Usually they just send in an SSBN. All they want to do is nuke everything." At which point instructors outline the laws of war, so not all is lost...

Raleigh has been increasingly introducing technology into its classrooms – last year we featured smart boards (digital blackboards) and the virtual boats being used by trainee submariners – but the comms centre takes it to the next level.

The team behind the popular *Call of Duty* video game franchise have helped to devise a training package in the same style for HMS Daring with challenges such as finding a terrorist bomb hidden on board (a few trainees, however, climb into the Merlin on the flight deck and simply go whizzing off in it).

Less graphically exciting is Navy *Blockbusters*, a reworking of the 80s "I'll have a 'p' please, Bob" gameshow, with the TV programme's general knowledge questions replaced by Senior Service specific ones, such as equal opportunities policies. And there are no prizes.

The £1m-plus centre, funded by the Skills Funding Agency, also features a history and heritage area (*pictured*), previously a rather spartan atrium, now filled with boards, displays, models, videos, interactive games and displays, focusing on inspirational figures from sailors who fought the slave trade in the late 19th Century to the RN's first female Military Cross winner, MA Kate Nesbitt who passed out of Raleigh not all that long ago.

The communications centre also doubles up as a learning centre/internet suite in evenings, and when the banks of computers are lowered those fancy desks are used for chart work and exercises which require a lot of space.

Not surprisingly Wayne likes all this wizardry. It's good for the staff. It's good for the trainees. But he adds a caveat.

"I am sure that in five years' time all this will be out of date – you have to keep pace with technology.

"And it's not a replacement for physical training, going into a 45 for real for example. But it is something which sailors will learn a great deal from.

"And sometimes there is still a need for the old methods, the Powerpoint presentation..."

Boo, hiss...

Gunners to get uprated protection

A NEW system to protect sailors manning upper-deck guns from pirates and terrorist attacks has been driven through to production thanks to MOD scientists.

The technical team at the Physical Sciences department of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), based at Porton Down in Wiltshire, began by analysing the so-called 'asymmetric threats' faced by the UK's maritime forces.

They then assessed the commercially-available options and made recommendations on the most viable systems.

After ballistic trials using small-arms fire, DSTL put their final recommendations to the Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) procurement team.

The verdict was that Dytecna Engineering's C-Shield system was just the ticket – at which point DSTL worked with the chosen supplier and DE&S to ensure it met the required standards.

C-Shield, which has now begun to appear on the upper decks of Type 23 frigates as an Urgent Operational Requirement, provides cover for small-calibre weapons crews from threats such as surface combatants.

It consists of panels made of layers of ultra high molecular weight polyethylene – the same material used for carrier bags – which provides high levels of protection, both as a reinforcement to existing structures or on its own.

The system can be adapted to a number of different gun positions, and can be stored flat when not in use, and individual plates can be replaced if they become damaged.

The final validation trial was carried out onboard HMS Quorn, and the first system delivered to the first frigate the following week.

Egg race first, then dinner...

MORE than 230 Engineer Officers joined Rear Admiral Bob Love and guest of honour Sir John Parker, chairman of the National Grid, for the annual Chief Naval Engineer Officers Dinner at HMS Sultan.

As it was Rear Admiral Love's last dinner as Chief Naval Engineer Officer (and his last as a member of the Royal Navy), the admiral was presented with the ignition key for HMS Ark Royal.

Seven groups were represented at an engineering challenge before the dinner – the Marine Engineers, Weapon Engineers, Air Engineers, ETMs, Devonport Naval Base, Portsmouth Naval Base and Thunderer Squadron had to design and build a device powered by a rubber band which would carry an egg over a ten-metre course.

On the grounds of cost, aesthetic appeal, engineering ingenuity, distance travelled and time taken, Devonport's machine was deemed the best, followed by the Air Engineers, with the Marine Engineers third.

Names added to memorial

THE process of adding new names to the Armed Forces Memorial is well under way in the Midlands.

Engraver Nick Hindle is adding the names of the 112 Servicemen and women killed on duty or through terrorism in 2010 – a task that will take around a month.

The characters are traced on to the Portland stone of the memorial, at Alrewas in Staffordshire, before they are made permanent with a hammer and chisel.

The 112 deaths represent one of the largest tolls of the past two decades, and all of their names will be read out and dedicated in a service for families, to be held at the RBL's National Memorial Arboretum later this year.

Nick said: "It's painstaking work, but given the scale of the sacrifice it represents, it's a job I'm hugely honoured to do."

Hi-tech reminders over men's health

NATIONAL Men's Health Week is staged next month, and the Royal Navy is keen to play its part in promoting better health in Jack.

The Service is dominated by males – in the officer cadre there are just over 6,000 men and little over 600 women, while there are some 26,000 male ratings compared to just under 3,000 females.

So there is good reason for the Senior Service to hook into the national initiative, which runs from June 13-19.

The theme this year is men and technology, with plenty of opportunities to gather information or run the rule over your own health through websites and downloadable material.

The online hub for the week is the website of the Men's Health Forum charity, www.menshealthforum.org.uk

By joining with a range of partners – particularly elements of the NHS – the week offers a wide range of opportunities, such as:

- A 'man MOT online' service where at selected times men can chat with a GP online about their health concerns;
- Male-targeted health information available online;
- Local events, organised by individual primary care or other health organisations, workplaces, sports organisations;
- In partnership with NHS Choices, an e-card will be produced for people to send a health message to men they care about;
- A new app using humour to raise men's health awareness.

Other areas touched on will include the dangers of obtaining counterfeit drugs through injudicious use of the internet.

It is acknowledged that many men are reluctant users of traditional health services, such as GPs and pharmacies, and do not always respond to mainstream health awareness campaigns, but do care about their health and will respond to messages when the information is presented in formats that appeal to them.

CPOPT Paul Newcombe, the Royal Navy's Assistant Staff Officer Physical Education and Executive Health, said: "The majority of the RN are made up of male personnel, so this initiative is particularly pertinent to our population."

He is hoping that ships, units and establishments will put their weight behind the week, and make full use of the resources available.

Contact Paul at TEMERAIRE-EXH

The big day approaches

ARMED Forces Day 2011 is Saturday June 25, and organisers around the country are preparing to pay tribute to the UK's Servicemen and women.

The main event is in Edinburgh, which is planning a weekend of events from June 24-26, including a march down the Royal Mile, a party in Holyrood Park, a concert at the Usher Hall and an air display over Leith, home of the Royal Yacht.

But other events are being staged on the day itself and the weeks around it, from Marazion in Cornwall (Armed Forces weekend, July 2-3) to a parade in Inverness (July 23).See www.armedforcesday.org.uk for further details.

Duchess meets Naval chaplains



● *The Duchess of Cornwall at the Royal Naval Chaplaincy Service annual conference at Amport House, the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre* Picture: LA(Phot) Dave Gallagher

THE Duchess of Cornwall has met the chaplains who support sailors and Royal Marines around the world – including six due to deploy to Afghanistan.

The Duchess was attending the Royal Naval Chaplaincy Service annual conference at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Amport House, near Andover, in her capacity as Commodore-in-Chief of the Naval Chaplaincy Service.

Around 60 chaplains attended; in addition to the six bound for Afghanistan (one to join the Joint Aviation Group, the other five bound for Royal Marines units), others have been 'friends and advisors' on board warships and at establishments at home and abroad, with current 'parishes' as diverse as the Indian Ocean (HMS Richmond), the Gulf (Iron Duke) and Kabul.

Around 40 per cent of the chaplains are deployed or deployable at any one time.

The Rev Ian Wheatley, Senior Chaplain 3 Commando Brigade, who will deploy later this month, said: "It was a great honour to meet the Duchess and to know that she is supporting us as we prepare to deploy.

"The Brigade has had first-class training and is raring to go.

"As chaplain our job is to be alongside people wherever they may be and that includes the frontline. It has its risks and we share those with the people we serve."



● *The Duke of York in HMS Dauntless during a Thursday War* Picture: LA(Phot) Dan Hooper

Duke sees Dauntless fight off the 'enemy'

THE Duke of York spent a few hours at sea with the Royal Navy's latest commissioned warship to see how she copes with a bit of enemy aggression.

HMS Dauntless was taking part in a Thursday War off Plymouth at the end of an intensive training period with the Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) organisation.

The Type 45 destroyer came under attack from 'enemy' aircraft, missiles and small boats, and her ship's company had to handle damage of various sorts, including fires and floods.

And Prince Andrew was accompanied throughout by FOST himself, Rear Admiral Chris Snow, who said: "I am delighted at the visit by His Royal Highness both in terms of him embarking a Royal Navy ship at sea, but also that the visit happened in Plymouth.

"Prince Andrew has an important role to play as Commander-in-Chief of the Fleet Air Arm, and a visit to the Navy's newest air defence destroyer is an excellent opportunity."

The Duke is believed to be the first member of the Royal Family to visit Dauntless.





● *Various contents of the faith cupboards: from left, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism*

Articles of faith



THE Royal Navy's first world faiths prayer room has been opened by four Service chaplains in Portsmouth Naval Base.

Contained within the Haven – the base's centre for spiritual and religious needs – at HMS Nelson, the room caters for Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Jewish and Muslim faiths.

The room is a light, neutrally-decorated space, and artefacts for each religion are kept in separate cupboards, which can be brought out and used by individuals wanting a quiet, spiritual place to worship.

● *Gathered in the new world faiths prayer room at HMS Nelson are (back row, from left): Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, Buddhist Civilian Chaplain to the Military, Mr Krishan Attri, Hindu Civilian Chaplain to the Military;(front row): Rabbi Arnie Saunders, Jewish Civilian Chaplain to the Military, Ms Mandeep Kaur, Sikh Civilian Chaplain to the Military*

Picture: LA(Phot) Kyle Heller

The Chaplaincy team leader at the Haven, the Rev Roland Wort, said: "It is a very important addition to the base because as the Royal Navy is recruiting from a wider constituency there will be people joining up who have backgrounds and traditions other than the Christian faith.

"They will need somewhere to worship, and it is about being sensitive and respectful to those needs and providing a facility where those personnel can exercise their faith."

The Haven provides a quiet, restful place for base personnel, and features a coffee bar, film nights and a library area where people can relax.

The new prayer room can be used by anyone wanting to worship or take a ten-minute break in a peaceful area.

Organised by the Haven's pastoral workers, John and Helen Gueran, the room took several months to complete.

But now it has been officially launched by chaplains from the Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist religions.

Mandeep Kaur, Civilian Chaplain to the Military (CCM) for the Sikh religion, said: "It is a brilliant addition to the base.

"Once personnel hear about it I expect there will be many people wanting to come here and use it – it has a very peaceful atmosphere.

"It demonstrates the Royal Navy's support for the different faiths by making this type of facility available."

Chaplains are deployable MOD civil servants who travel around all three Services to support personnel in practising their faith.

They can go on operations, and usually work from the base nearest their home, from which they will travel across the country.

The Naval Service has just over 35,000 serving personnel, made up of approximately 3,400 females and 32,000 males.

According to Joint Personnel Administration (JPA) returns, more than 30,000 regard themselves as Christians from 26 religious denominations, while 57 Christian Traditionalists represent six religious denominations.

There are also 41 Buddhists, 22 Hindus, 12 Sikhs, nine Jews, 29 Muslims and two Kirati.

157 have ticked the 'Other Religions' box which includes Rastafarians, Druids, Spiritualists, Pagans and Wiccas.

More than 5,000 people have ticked the 'No Religion' box which includes Humanists, Agnostic, Atheists and Secularists – a snapshot which explains why diversity is on the agenda when policy and plans are formulated.

RAF church hosts Day of Prayer

THE Central Church of the RAF, St Clement Danes in London, will be the focus for the annual Armed Forces Day of Prayer, Thursday June 23.

In times of conflict in the past, the nation was exhorted to pray for her sailors, soldiers and airmen and their families.

Over the past five years the call was taken up as a day dedicated to prayer for Servicemen and women, and organisers feel the initiative is as relevant today as ever.

Initially held close to Remembrance Day, the day is now tied to Armed Forces Day in mid-summer, to emphasise the focus on those currently serving, their families and friends.

The day is supported by the Armed Forces Chaplaincies, and by the many military Christian organisations that are associated with, and serve, the Armed Forces – in the case of the Navy, specifically the Naval Christian Fellowship and the RSR.

St Clement Danes, in the Strand, will be available for prayer and worship from 10am until 4pm, with a formal service starting at 11.30am.

Services and events will also be held across the UK, in deployed ships and units, and in operational theatres including Afghanistan.

www.pray4ourforces.org.uk



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● *Attendees at the Tri-Service All Faiths Awareness Day at Devonport, including Fr Michael Kirkpatrick (back row, third left), Captain of Devonport Naval Base Capt Mark Knibbs (back, centre), the Rev Stan Kennon, Pilot Officer Harry Chandan (RAF) and SAC James Potter (RAF); (front row, from left): Rabbi Arnie Saunders, Jewish Civilian Chaplain to the Military (CCM), Lt Richie Moss, Chair of the Armed Forces Buddhist Society, Ms Mandeep Kaur, Sikh CCM, Mr Krishan Attri, Hindu CCM, Lt Cdr Mandy McBain, Assistant RN Equality and Diversity Policy Officer, and Dr Sunil Kariyakarawana, Buddhist CCM*

Picture: LA(Phot) Shaun Barlow

Awareness and understanding

REPRESENTATIVES of the diverse faiths found amongst members of the Armed Forces gathered at HMS Drake to meet and learn more about each other.

The Tri-Service All Faiths Awareness Day attracted 75 attendees, who represented the Naval Service, NFPS, the RAF and civilian organisations.

They were able to explore religious traditions other than their own, and meet with the Civilian Chaplains to the Military (CCMs).

The Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish and a serving Christian Chaplain conducted brief presentations and syndicate discussions.

People were able to ask questions that led to a broader understanding and awareness of faith groups in the Armed Forces and how faith relates and contributes to operational effectiveness.

The gathering follows on from a series of single-faith and belief conferences and gatherings, including the Sikh Chaplaincy conference in Hounslow last November, the Armed Forces Jewish Community Moral Leadership course and reunion at Amport House (the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre near Andover) in January and the UK Armed Forces Humanist Association inaugural conference and annual general meeting at the same venue later the same month.

Chatham stays on heritage shortlist

CHATHAM Historic Dockyard has taken another major step forward in earning recognition as a world-class attraction.

The dockyard and its associated defences have been on the UK shortlist for nomination onto the World Heritage Status scheme since 1999.

That list was opened to scrutiny by the Government, and 38 applications were made by interested organisations; just 11 made it through to the new shortlist, announced by Tourism and Heritage Minister John Penrose - and Chatham was one.

The proposed site includes more than 60 scheduled ancient monuments and 150 listed buildings, covering the dockyard itself, Fort Amherst, Upnor Castle, Brompton village and Barracks, the Great Lines and the River Medway.

Chatham is the world's most complete example of an historic dockyard from the age of sail and early age of steam, covering the period from around 1700 to 1865, and played a crucial role in securing and maintaining Britain's worldwide influence, leading the world in industrial design, naval architecture and military technology.

The Leader of Medway Council, Cllr Rodney Chambers, said: "This is a major step forward in our bid for World Heritage Status, which will be a well-deserved milestone in the regeneration of Chatham and recognition of its rich and vast history."

The Chief Executive of Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Bill Ferris, added: "This new much shorter list of just 11 sites confirms the international status of the Historic Dockyard and its defences."

Chatham's bid is the first on the list of potential nominations to be completed, an occasion marked by the burial of a time capsule containing a collection of commemorative items representing Medway's heritage at the Great Lines Heritage Park last September.

The government will now forward the list to UNESCO, and it is allowed to propose one candidate each year, starting in 2012.

There are currently 27 World Heritage Sites in the UK.

The Historic Dockyard has also won praise from Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, for the site's heritage-based business model.

Using the principle 'preservation through re-use', the dockyard is making a name for itself in the UK heritage sector as a beacon of imaginative cultural regeneration.

During his tour of the dockyard, Mr Hunt said; "The Historic Dockyard Chatham is a fantastic example of a site that has encouraged philanthropy, developed innovative partnerships between local and national institutions such as the National Maritime Museum and the Imperial War Museum, and also involved the local community in its plans.

"The recent launch of No.1 Smithery is a fine example of this; the restoration of an historic building allowing visitors to look at previously unseen maritime artefacts and heritage inspiring learning and education, and it's wonderful to be able to see this first hand."



● *The figurehead of post-Napoleonic frigate HMS Unicorn in Dundee*

Unicorn brought into national museum fold

THE National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) is expanding its empire to take in a sailing warship from the early 19th century.

And the Princess Royal, in her capacity as patron of both organisations, was due to officially mark the new affiliation as *Navy News* went to press.

The new link brings the Unicorn Preservation Society into the fold as an official affiliate – bringing with it HM Frigate Unicorn herself, berthed in a dock in Dundee.

The NMRN was established to create, preserve, explain and celebrate the contribution made by the Royal Navy during its 1,000 years, in the defence of the UK and its overseas interests.

This particular affiliation aims to increase the understanding and importance of the Navy to Britain's heritage and to display a clear link between HMS Victory in Portsmouth and HMS Unicorn in Dundee, illustrating the ships and people of the Royal Navy in the final century of sail.

It will also act as a platform for publicising the role of the RNR and its predecessors in the 19th, and 20th centuries – Unicorn was the reserve HQ in the city for the best part of 100 years, and acted as a Naval HQ in both World Wars.

The link is also designed to attract national support and add experience to the Unicorn Preservation Society in its battle to secure the old frigate's long-term future – it is claimed there are only five ships left in the entire world older than Unicorn.

Lord Dalhousie, chairman of the Unicorn Preservation Society, said, "This magnificent opportunity to link Unicorn with the National Museum of the Royal Navy arose as a direct result of the Princess Royal holding a charity forum last year to mark her 60th birthday.

"All her charities were invited to discuss their challenges and opportunities, and we all made some extremely relevant contacts.

"HM Frigate Unicorn is no longer a commissioned warship, but she still firmly belongs in the Naval family, and this affiliation represents a very real and valuable integration of Britain's Royal Naval heritage.

"Unicorn is a wooden ship and she cannot remain afloat indefinitely.

"We are determined to preserve her extraordinary originality, so she needs to be docked in a dry berth covered from the weather.

"There is now also an opportunity for Unicorn to move to an ideal final berth within Dundee's new Central Waterfront development, and it is almost exactly where she spent her first century in Dundee.

"This option brings HM Frigate Unicorn into a spectacular triangular relationship with RRS Discovery and the V&A Dundee, and would bring Dundee's two great historic ships back together."

Princess Anne was due to unveil drawings by Sir Robert Seppings, who designed Unicorn - copies of originals held by the NMRN and donated to the Unicorn.

Unicorn was built in 1824, to the designs of Sir Robert Seppings, the Surveyor of the Navy from 1813-1832, at a time when the shortage of timber and the growing availability of iron was dramatically affecting the way ships were built.

Seppings, who has been described as the Navy's Brunel, introduced engineering concepts to naval shipbuilding.

His new methods of construction greatly strengthened wooden ships, and he took full advantage of the availability, strength and compactness of iron.

Unicorn represents the last great flourish of wooden shipbuilding and heralds the birth of the iron ship – though she never served in the Fleet, having been launched straight into reserve, and never even had a mast raised ion her.

Her only sea voyage was the one that saw her towed to Dundee – but she remains a significant example of the classic sailing frigates.

Dr Dominic Tweddle, Director General of the NMRN said: "The opportunity to welcome HMS Unicorn, an historic ship of national importance, as an affiliate of the National Museum means that the story of the Royal Navy, its ships and its people can now be told on a national scale.

"The sharing of skills, knowledge, and in the future artefacts means that we can tell the story of the Royal Navy in a way that would have been impossible before."

Code centre unveils 2011 programme

THE NATIONAL Codes Centre at Bletchley Park has announced its programme for the 2011 season, aiming to build on a record-breaking year.

Last year saw a 20 per cent increase in visitor numbers over 2009, and with extensive media interest and support from individuals and companies such as Hewlett Packard, 2010 was a special year.

The 2011 programme of events will again bring out the best of Bletchley Park, with a range of activities to suit everyone, from families to computer geeks, photography buffs to 1940s enthusiasts.

There will be traditional events like the well-established Forties Family Festival, plus new offerings such as a photographic competition, 'Picture Bletchley Park'. The season kicked off with the family Easter Eggstravaganza, which will be followed by one of the Park's most popular events, the Forties Family Festival (May 29-30), which last year brought in a record number of visitors and re-enactors.

It will feature wartime re-enactors bringing the atmosphere of 1940s Britain back to life and also featuring 1940s dancers, music, vintage vehicles and a 40s fashion show.

The annual Polish Day is on July, 17, celebrating the vital contribution made by Polish codebreakers into breaking Enigma.

Bletchley Park's annual Classic Car and Motorbike Picnic is held on August 7 featuring classic vehicles large and small – last year attracted more than 300 vehicles.

And there will again be a series of Family Fun Wednesdays planned for the school holidays, designed for children from the age of four upwards.

This year Bletchley Park will be combining the annual Enigma Reunion with an Armed Forces weekend, including the Cadet Field Gun competition between Army, Navy and Air cadets, to be held on September 3-4.

As well as World War 2 re-enactors and displays, visitors will be able to mix with and talk to men and women who worked at Bletchley Park during the war when the veterans return to Bletchley Park on the Sunday.

Bletchley Park was credited with cracking the German Enigma code, which periodically allowed Allied forces to read key German messages and pre-empt enemy movements.

It also had a vital role in the development of modern computers.

Capsule captures modern life

HASLEMERE Preparatory School has won the Mary Rose Museum Time Capsule competition, gaining £500 for the school and a front-row seat at the ceremony to mark the laying of the new museum building's foundation stone.

Entries were received from primary and secondary schools, as well as Scout groups, from across the country.

But Haslemere's choice of eight items was deemed a suitably imaginative mix which offered a snapshot of current affairs and everyday life – just as the Mary Rose offers a snapshot of life in Tudor times.

The items chosen by the children were a souvenir of the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, an Argos catalogue, a cheque book, the top 20 songs for March 2011, a model of the Ark Royal and a poppy, a cricket ball, a mobile phone and an energy-saving light bulb.

The runners-up were St John's Primary School, Portsmouth, and Crookhorn Technology College.

Kiev arrives at Yeovilton



● *Dave Wooley's model of the Soviet aircraft carrier Kiev, which he has presented to the Fleet Air Arm Museum*

A FOUR-year labour of love by a former RAF air crewman has been presented to the Fleet Air Arm Museum for safekeeping.

Maritime enthusiast Dave Wooley is keenly interested in the naval deterrents of the Cold War, and in 2005 set about building what he believed to be the only large-scale working model of Soviet aircraft carrier Kiev as she was in the 1980s.

Basic drawings were sourced in Russia, and much additional research had to be carried out, as well as manufacturing of parts from scratch.

Photos of sister ship Minsk, now preserved in China, and chats with former Kiev sailors helped with some of the specifications.

The two-metre radio-controlled model was completed in 2009 and is powered by four electric motors.

On her deck stand Yak 38 'Forgers', the Soviet version of the Sea Harrier, and a KA25C Komov search-and-rescue helicopter.

Dave Hill, head of the curatorial division at the Yeovilton museum, said: "Whilst we have a considerable exhibition reflecting the West's naval Cold War deterrent, this is a fascinating example of the East's naval military power."

Former PO is now an author

A FORMER petty officer who has suffered heartache in his life has put his story-telling talents to use by writing a children's book.

Stuart 'Soapy' Soper was a senior rate in the mine warfare branch from 1977-84, including tours to the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans.

But in the midst of what he thought would be a long career, his young son was diagnosed with leukaemia, and following his son's death Stuart was given a compassionate discharge to be with his wife.

Sadly Stuart's wife died not many years later, leaving him to bring up two young children.

He took various jobs, including milkman and community policeman – then in mid-1999 narrowly escaped death when, while gardening, he was bitten by a tiny infected spider.

He won his battle for life, but the infection left him permanently disabled and in constant pain from his damaged legs.

He has now had to give up working – his last job was in a bank – and focussing his mind on drawing and writing not only helped him through, but have opened up a new avenue.

Stuart, now 53, turned the bedtime tales he told his nippers into illustrated stories and the first – *Milky Saves Christmas* – has now been published and a second is with the publishers.

Royals applaud Zander's mettle

MOST young lads play soldiers at some point in their lives – but most don't get to call on the Royal Marines to help live the dream.

But then most young lads do not display the kind of mettle which drew admiration from battle-hardened commandos.

The young lad was eight-year-old Zander Heneghan, from Brora on the east coast of Scotland.

And the warriors were the men of 45 Commando at Arbroath.

Zander was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer called rhabdomyosarcoma last year.

After hearing about Zander's bravery as he underwent chemotherapy, Royals from RM Condor – who have just deployed for their fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan – decided to reward him with a day at the unit.

On his arrival Zander was issued with the elite Royal Marines green beret before he embarked upon a busy programme.

Following a weapons demonstration, Zander received hands-on training on a simulated rifle range before an outdoor lesson on living in the field.

After lunch with Regimental Sergeant Major WO1 Stephen Moran, Zander was presented with a coveted 45 Commando 'yomper' figurine.

And Zander finished by tackling the unit's 30ft climbing wall.

WO Moran said: "The Royal Marines ethos is based on determination and courage in the face of adversity and this little lad has shown that in spades.

"Throughout the day, Zander demonstrated his exceptional fighting spirit and impressed all those at 45 Commando."

Zander fell ill in March last year when a lump on his arm turned out to be a tumour.

Zander *(right)* remains cheerful despite weekly ten-hour return trips to Glasgow and gruelling chemotherapy.

Brora villagers have rallied round to help Zander and his family – one initiative was a calendar by the 'mams of Brora'. Further details can be found at www.zandercalendar.com





Dolls stand in for Dads

A NAVAL mum's efforts to maintain the bond between father and daughter while dad was away on deployment has led to a thriving business.

"When my daughter was born, my husband went away for seven and a half months," said Jo Craig.

"When he left, our daughter couldn't even roll over. When he came back, she was a walking, talking toddler.

"When he came home, she pointed to him and shouted out 'Daddy!' We couldn't believe that she recognised him."

Jo believes it was because she had a photo in her room – which set mum thinking...

The result was a pair of dolls, ready in time for daddy's next deployment, which their son and daughter used to cuddle at night.

The dolls were imprinted with a photo, helping the children through the long separation – and so Love Mini Mine was born.

"It's been nearly three years since I made the first doll – it's a bit soggy round the edges now..." said Jo. See www.loveminimine.co.uk for more details.

Jo said: "I would like to give a Love Mini Mine doll to one of the *Navy News* readers.

"If you would like to win a Love Mini Mine doll, please send an email to me at jo@loveminimine.co.uk telling me why you want one. Our favourite story will win a doll."

A flagship wedding



● *Lt Dave Manning and Dr Natalie Draper leave the King's Chapel in Gibraltar through a wedding arch of swords provided by the wardroom of HMS Albion*

COUGAR 11 flagship HMS Albion may have only had a brief stop at Gibraltar on her way into the Mediterranean.

But the three-day visit was long enough for a Naval officer on board to get married – and his shipmates helped make the event memorable.

Weapon engineer section officer Lt Dave Manning married Dr Natalie Draper, his fiancée of five years, in the stunning surroundings of the King's Chapel on Main Street.

Lt Manning joined the Navy in 2005 and re-joined Albion in April, having spent his two months Specialist Fleet Time onboard the amphibious assault ship.

Natalie and Dave got together while they were both studying at university – they met at the Cambridge University Astronomical Society and have been star-gazing together ever since.

The bride was collected from her hotel in the Captain's Land Rover and taken to the historic King's Chapel, where the wedding ceremony was held.

The entire wardroom of the flagship turned out for the service to lend their support.

And what better venue for the reception than on board their ship?

The honeymoon, however, was somewhat brief – Albion sailed the following morning...

Cougar unleashed – page 4

Pilot collects his MBE

A HELICOPTER instructor at Yeovilton has been presented with his MBE by the Queen in recognition of a distinguished career.

Lt Cdr Andrew Clarke joined the Royal Navy as an aircraft engineering mechanic aged 16, and although he enjoyed maintaining helicopters and Sea Harriers, his ambition was to be a pilot.

Through the Naval education system he gained the qualifications he needed to become an officer (making the grade in 1986) and a pilot, gaining his wings in 1987.

Flying Sea Kings in the Commando Helicopter Force, he has seen operational service in the first Gulf War, northern Iraq, Bosnia and Northern Ireland, and as second-in-command of a Navy Lynx attack squadron, he played a key role in the assault on the Al Faw peninsula in Iraq in 2003.

Most recently, Lt Cdr Clarke was deployed to northern Norway, where he led the Commando Helicopter Force mountain and cold weather training school *(see page 9)*.

Of his award, Lt Cdr Clarke said: "Whilst it is a fantastic honour to receive such an award, I am sure that I have done no more or no better than any of my colleagues and I certainly would not have gained such recognition without their comradeship and support."

Man and machine pass 1,000 hours

A NAVY pilot notched up 1,000 career flying hours – shortly before his helicopter achieved the same landmark.

The sortie which saw Lt Andy Bird, of 829 Naval Air Squadron, pass 1,000 hours was certainly memorable.

Having been on ceremonial duty in London at the end of February, HMS Westminster was tasked at short notice to sail in support of operations off Libya.

With a mix of stores transfer flights between ships, anti-surface warfare patrols and long-range missions into Malta, Lt Bird was kept busy.

And it was a testing night sortie to Valletta, in poor conditions into an unfamiliar airfield, returning to a moving deck in darkness, that saw Lt Bird achieve the magic figure.

"That was certainly one of the more interesting sorties that I've flown in my time as a pilot, but a successful career in aviation means making as many successful landings as take-offs," he said.

"That's something I intend to continue."

Shortly after HMS Westminster Flight's Merlin, ZH841, also passed 1,000 hours in flight, and both milestones were marked by the presentation of a cake and bottle of champagne by the frigate's Commanding Officer, Cdr Tim Green.

Jan leaves

FORMER green beret Jan Cowling has bid farewell to BRNC after being part of the civilian staff team for 32 years.

Jan served eight years as a commando, including two spells in Northern Ireland, before joining the college in 1979, initially maintaining the college pool's filtration plant but then taking his dream job in the Expedition Store.

Jan also spent 23 years as part of the retained fireman crew in Dartmouth, and with his wife Patricia ran the Duke of Edinburgh scheme for 12 years as well as being a leading light of the local Scout group.



● *A pair of Royal Navy clearance divers staging a mock underwater fight. Armed for self-protection, this team of divers discreetly survey potential invasion beaches. This image was staged to create a unique Christmas greetings card for the team*

Image © Simon Brown. All rights reserved – www.simonbrownimages.com

'Fight' image wins prize

A PICTURE taken during an editorial shoot with Portsmouth-based Royal Navy divers won a top prize in a photographic competition.

The shoot, by Simon Brown, with Fleet Diving Unit 2 took place just before Christmas, and during the programme the team asked Simon if he could create a greetings card.

"We ran through the pose above water, and then with careful lighting, the image was created underwater," said Simon.

He was so pleased with the result that the image was entered in the British Underwater Image Festival, where it took first prize in the Open category.

The judges praised Simon's use of lighting, using remote flashes, and the subtlety of the composition.

www.simonbrownimages.com

Medal for Tim

A DRIVER who retired after a 30-year career at RN Air Station Yevilton has been presented with an Imperial Service Medal.

Tim Williams, who retired last October, was presented with the medal by the CO of Yeovilton, Brig Mark Noble RM, who paid tribute to Tim's dedication.

"It was a way of life for me, and I enjoyed every minute of it," said Tim.



Memories of Diadem

BOB Roberts was a chief petty officer on board HMS Diadem during World War 2.

Bob's grandson Joe, aged 8, attends Presteigne Primary School in Powys.

So when World War 2 was on the curriculum, it seemed clear Bob had something to contribute.

He volunteered to visit the school *(pictured above)* to talk about his life and work in those difficult days on board the light cruiser, which saw service on Arctic convoys, at the Normandy landings and in subsequent operations off the coast of France.

He also brought his medals to show the children, who subsequently wrote to Bob to thank him for sharing his memories with them.

Observer achieves landmark

OBSERVER Lt Cdr Gordon Cook has notched up 5,000 hours flying time in Lynx helicopters.

Gordon first qualified as an observer in 1987, a year after his first flight in a Lynx.

Although he has stuck to the same aircraft, he has managed to notch up a number of variations, including the Mk2, Mk3 and Mk8 with the RN, the Mk95 with the Portuguese and the Mk100 with the Malaysians.

Gordon, who passed the 5,000-hour mark on a night sortie, is a Qualified Observer, Helicopter Warfare, Night Vision Goggle and Airborne Gun Instructor, providing critical operational training to front-line observers throughout the Fleet Air Arm.

He is currently officer in command of the Lynx simulator at Yeovilton, and is soon due to return to front-line duties with 815 Naval Air Squadron, the largest helicopter squadron in Western Europe, which supplies flights to frigates and destroyers.

Hall porter has retired

A HALL porter at HMS Raleigh who first joined the Navy more than 50 years ago has retired.

Richard 'Sharky' Ward, 68, first entered HMS Raleigh as a junior gunner in 1959, and served in seven ships in a 22-year career.

Retiring from the Navy in 1982, Sharky joined Raleigh as a civilian employee the same month, starting as a storeman in the Fire School then transferring to the officers' mess the following year as a hall porter.

He has seen 15 COs come and go at the Torpoint training establishment, and watched junior officers climb the promotion ladder – Capt Steve Murdoch, the current CO of the base, was a junior sub-lieutenant when they first met.

A special lunch was held at the mess in Sharky's honour, when he was presented with an engraved decanter.

Submariner tops the list

HELSTON submariner LET Tobias Turner has proven himself to be one of the Royal Navy's top students.

The technician undertook a 22-week training course at the RN Submarine School, based at HMS Raleigh, and his efforts earned him the McCann Huntrod Trophy for top student for 2009-10.

The course prepares submariners for promotion and teaches them advance skills in maintaining surveillance, communications, radar and sonar systems on board the Navy's nuclear submarines.

LET Turner, who joined the Senior Service in 2003, is now putting his skills to practical use in HMS Talent.

Shelly and Boo visit nursery

SHELLY the giant hissing cockroach, Brian the giant snail, Lisa the leopard gecko, Boo the barn owl and Tyke the chinchilla paid a visit to Devonport Naval Base in the company of the 'Animal Man'.

Jack Pressman of the Animal Lecture Service brought his menagerie to the Roger's Burrow nursery to allow the children to see, touch and learn a little about the unusual creatures and their habitat.

More than 30 youngsters and parents turned up to meet the animals, with Tyke winning plenty of new fans – including three-year-old Jamie-Lou Syms, who said: "I liked the big mouse – he was very soft."



● *Amy Bridle, Surg Lt Amelia Pedrick and ex-CPOAEA Andy Pedrick with some of their Dorper sheep at Churchill Farm in Devon*

RN dentist's sheep fill gap in St Helena

A NAVY dentist is doing her bit to help out one of the most remote communities on Earth – but it has nothing to do with her professional skills, and revisits a link forged more than a quarter of a century ago.

It's all about sheep...

Surg Lt Amelia Pedrick and her sister Amy Bridle have a flock of Dorper sheep, introduced to the UK just six years ago although first bred in South Africa in the 1930s.

They are hardy, fast-breeding, high meat-yield and easy-care animals (they shed their own wool) – ideal for an isolated spot like St Helena, 1,200 miles from the nearest major landfall and home to fewer than 5,000 people.

So when St Helena approached British breeders to start a flock of Dorper sheep on the tropical Atlantic island, various farms offered to contribute, one of them being Churchill Farm in Devon, home of Amelia and Amy's flock.

The Dorper – which takes its name from its main ancestors, the Dorset and the Persian – was an instant hit in the UK, as they have been wherever they have been exported.

"They became a big success," said Amelia, who works in the dental section at HMS Nelson in Portsmouth.

"They can withstand heat and cold, and are not bothered by the wet.

"They have spread around the world, but did not arrive in this country until quite recently, and there are not many of them.

"The UK has such high standards in farming as to what we can import and quarantine, which is why they looked to this country."

Amelia and Amy – who is secretary of the British Dorper Sheep Society – provided two yearling rams for the first consignment of six to travel to St Helena on the regular steamer run from Cape Town.

The sheep arrived early last month, and more may follow.

Combining a military career with farming is something of a family tradition for Amelia.

Her grandfather was involved in agriculture and moved into the allied haulage industry.

"Dad was brought up with travelling with livestock," said Amelia – but his travelling took a rather different direction when he joined the Navy in 1974.

Andy Pedrick served for 23 years, many of those as an aircraft technician on helicopters including the Westland Wasp and the Lynx, and in smaller ships, such as Hydra, Gurkha and Herald – when serving in the latter she deployed to St Helena.

And it was when Herald was in St Helena that Andy learnt of the birth of his daughter Amelia back home in June 1985.

Although the RN and farming were not entirely complementary, Andy and his wife bought Churchill Farm in the summer of 1992 – "we moved in one day and Dad went off to sea the next day for months," recalled Amelia.

But five years later he retired from the Mob and now deals exclusively with his 'hobby'.



● *AB Kelly Allman and an unnamed worm, both of whom worked hard to help create a woodland walk at Parc Eglos school in Helston* Picture: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow

Grounds for improvement

TEAMS from RN Air Station Culdrose have been visiting Parc Eglos school in Helston to help create and develop a woodland walk and outdoor classroom.

The Culdrose personnel included five senior ratings from the Engineering Training School and a number of trainee air engineering technicians.

The aim of the project is to give the pupils an area within the school grounds that allows them freedom and a change from the usual school routine.

This outdoor environment will also serve as a valuable learning resource and teaching aid as it will include a small pond and woodland walk area, where wild plants and animals will flourish, allowing the pupils easy access to nature and a fun hands-on learning experience.

Over the years children of many naval families have been educated at Parc Eglos school, with which Culdrose maintains a close link.

PO Paul Smith, an instructor at the Engineering Training School, said: "I have two children in the school and wanted to do this project because I felt it would be good for the school, the community and Culdrose."

The team started by clearing land and removing weeds and rubbish, and extending the existing woodland path, then installing an outdoor classroom.

Climber thanks rescuers

TWO members of the HMS Gannet aircrew have passed personal milestones in their careers – and the unit has been thanked by the man who made the headlines by falling off a mountain and surviving.

PO Marcus 'Wiggy' Wigfull, 39, has become the most called-out search-and-rescue aircrewman in the Royal Navy with 800 sorties in his 22-year career, in the course of which almost 600 people have been rescued.

Meanwhile Capt Michael 'Jack' Frost RM has passed 6,000 flying hours – equivalent to 250 days in the air.

Jack joined the Royal Marines in 1974 and saw action in the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan; he has been a pilot with HMS Gannet since 2009.

The veteran rescuers will have come across few stories to beat the lucky escape of climber Adam Potter, who fell 1,000ft down Sgurr Choinnich Mor, near Ben Nevis, in late January.

When the Gannet crew received the call-out they feared the worst.

But on arrival they found Adam standing near the base of the peak studying a map, having sustained relatively minor injuries.

Adam had asked to visit the unit to thank the team face-to-face, because when they picked him up he was in shock and disorientated, so believes he was still in danger.

Last year Gannet was the busiest search-and-rescue unit for the fourth year in a row, with 379 call-outs and 324 people rescued.

Dog's life for couple

A FORMER Navy couple's lives have gone to the dogs since they left the Service.

Ex-PO(Wtr) Mark Tolan recently retired from the Logistics Branch after 23 years, and is now aiming to build on the success of his wife Joanne's mobile dog grooming business by launching it as a franchise operation nationwide.

Joanne also served in the Navy, which is how the couple met.

Dog Groom UK Ltd has a target to sell 100 franchises over the next five years and Mark sees it as an opportunity for dog lovers who are retiring, or being made redundant from the Forces, to invest in their own business.

Said Mark: "For pet lovers, working for yourself with the animals that you love, must be the ideal scenario and I am confident that the franchises will be much in demand, particularly with people who have been made redundant and have a redundancy package available to invest."

He pointed out that partners would not just wash dogs but be trained to City and Guilds standards to groom dogs up to breed standards.



● *Ark Royal was not the only Navy stalwart to bow out in the late spring. As well as Ark Royal, Portsmouth Naval Base also bid farewell to the Mobile Clothing Wagon, which had been running for more than 40 years and was stopped as a savings measure. Pictured with the wagon is Russ Heaysman, who has been the driver of the wagon for the past 15 years after serving in the Navy for a quarter of a century. Pictured with him is his brother Bernie, a chief petty officer, and ship's company from the Ark. As well as Portsmouth area establishments and ships, the wagon also visited Chicksands in Bedfordshire, Shrivenham, and RAF Innsworth in Gloucestershire*

Frankton memorial unveiled

A MEMORIAL to the Cockleshell Heroes has been unveiled at la Pointe de Grave, on the Gironde estuary in France.

The ceremony to unveil the memorial to the Royal Marines who took part in **Operation Frankton**, in December 1942, was attended by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope, who spoke of the qualities shown by the men of the Naval Service then, as now.

"In this memorial we witness the story of courage, leadership and professionalism unfold, so that the quiet heroism displayed by previous generations might serve as a source of inspiration for current and future generations," said Admiral Stanhope.

"In this memorial we observe the enduring qualities of the Royal Marines and Royal Navy.

"This site is particularly poignant. Not just for its exposure to the raw elements, felt so acutely by the ten young Royal Marines involved in this operation in the winter of 1942, but because of this site's proximity to the place where these brave men were together for the last time.

"This memorial commemorates the sacrifices made by the eight men who gave their lives for the freedom of others.

"Qualities which, in the pursuit of freedom, continue to be demonstrated in abundance, across the world, by courageous individuals today."

The Admiral also thanked the people who had helped create the monument, saying: "Memorials don't build themselves. They are a product of people's vision, commitment, energy and financial generosity."

In particular he thanked the Bordeaux Port Authority, Erick Poineau and Malcolm Cavan for their efforts in seeing the project come to fruition.

Operation Frankton involved a 60-mile journey in December 1942 undertaken by a team of ten Royal Marines in fragile two-man canoes, to destroy ships in the port of Bordeaux by attaching limpet mines – a sixth canoe was damaged while being unloaded from the submarine HMS Tuna off the mouth of the Gironde.

The mission was described as suicidal, but which Winston Churchill said shortened the war by six months.

Of the ten men actually involved, two died of hypothermia before reaching their target, six were captured and executed, while the mission leader, Maj 'Blondie' Hasler and his shipmate Mne Bill Sparks finally escaped to Spain and were repatriated.

Six ships were damaged by mines during the raid, immortalised in the 1950s film *The Cockleshell Heroes*.

Hasler and Sparks' route on foot to Spain is now marked by the 100-mile Frankton Trail.

Back South

THE **HMS Troubridge** 2010 reunion at Blackpool last October was such a resounding success, with almost 50 attending, that plans have now been finalised for yet another get-together, this time on October 21-23 at the King Charles Hotel in Gillingham.

Bridport padre is mourned

SHIPMATES at **Bridport** branch are mourning the passing of their padre.

The Rev Canon Sydney Willcox died on March 18.

Syd, as he was known, was born on Boxing Day 1936 in North Wales, and he married his wife Jenny at Beaumaris on Anglesey.

He graduated from the University of Wales in 1958 and began his career as a cleric two years later.

Syd held various appointments, ranging from deacon, curate, rector and team rector to rural dean and reverend canon, and the locations were just as diverse, including Pwllheli in North Wales, Marlborough in Wiltshire, Cockermouth and Carlisle in Cumbria.

He also joined the Royal Army Chaplain's Department where he served as a padre with the Territorial Army from 1978 to 2001.

Syd retired to Bridport in 2002 where he became part of the local ministerial scene.

In 2005 he became chaplain to Bridport branch, being made an honorary shipmate that same year, and three years later he was appointed No 4 Area Chaplain.

Syd played a major role in branch activities and even though he was not from a naval background he always did his homework and tailored his sermons, prayers and readings to the RNA, the Royal Navy and the sea.

Musings of a World War 2 submariner

SUBMARINES are something of a closed book to many, but the minutiae of life once they leave the jetty provide a fascinating insight into life on a boat in wartime.

Penny Welstead's late father Ray jotted down some thoughts on his Service life, which Ms Welstead has passed on to *Navy News*.

Entitled 'Life and Death in Boats', Ray said that during World War 2 the Royal Navy lost 78 boats of various sizes, many with no survivors and an average crew of around 50.

"One in three did not return from patrol, but even so, I never heard of one man who would miss going out with his boat and his mates," wrote Ray.

"Each patrol lasted between three and four weeks, or until you ran out of torpedoes or became short of fuel.

"Some boats were prone to trouble with the escape hatches. When being depth-charged the hatches sprung and leaked quite a lot – but the powers-that-be had a simple remedy for that.

"Before sailing they would weld the hatches shut – it did not matter or worry the lads. 'You were not going to get out anyway…'

"In the clear waters of the Med an aircraft could still see us when we were 30-35ft down, and as boats were usually at this depth you were on your toes all the time with the Officer of the Watch keeping frequent sweeps on the periscope, up and all around.

"Even our own planes used to have a go at us.



● *One of the most famous wartime submarines lost – HMS Turbulent, commanded by Cdr Tubby Linton VC, sunk in the Med in March 1943*

"Every night we had to surface in order to charge the batteries for the following day, and that was when we were at our most vulnerable.

"That was my job, and I was always glad when the battery readings were well up.

"It was while on the surface at night charging the batteries that we had our one and only cooked meal of the day, usually about midnight.

"Other meals were whatever was going – cold, of course; dare not waste the batteries.

"Still, we ate well, with all the best available.

"Prior to a patrol the boat was packed with packets of cornflakes, tins of this and that, plus bread for two or three days.

"All these tins and packets were stuffed anywhere and everywhere – you could not move for them.

"We never had a real cook in those days – it was an able seaman or stoker detailed off for the job.

"Some liked it and some did not, that's the way it was.

"Many a time in rough weather I passed the galley and saw pots and pans come flying out into the gangway.

"It was a thankless job feeding 63 men in a kitchen the size of a broom cupboard.

"One boat I was in had been in a Force 8 for a week up in the North Atlantic and Denmark Strait – we could not dive to get under it because the foreplanes were jammed in the 'up' position.

"The poor cook had had enough so he went straight to the skipper in the control room, threw his dish rag on the deck and told him 'if you want a f***ing meal cook it yourself, and if you don't like it you can shoot me.

"Needless to say, we were not like a ship's crew, and he was told not to be a prat, have a glass of neaters and go and lay down – all over, all forgotten, no punishment.

"That's how it was in boats, one of those things.

"Still on the cook side, as I said, the bread we took out only lasted a couple of days, then it was up to the cook. Most never had a clue.

"Obviously, bread-baking was done on the surface at night. Our cook did a lovely-looking loaf but you had to eat it hot or even warm; once it was cold you needed an axe to cut it but it was okay dipped in tea or soup.

"In general we ate pretty well.

"The captain's task was to look for targets and sink them – some patrols were good and some never found a thing, returning with our 'fish'.

"Obviously I can't write about all that went on – in fact, I forget a lot, but in general it was a period in my life that I would not have missed for anything.

"Crews were selected from General Service (ships), and about 40 per cent were weeded out in the first week.

"The rest went the course, which you either passed or failed. Fail and you were sent back to ships, pass and you were sent to your first boat as a highly-trained man in whatever branch you were in, in my case electrical.

"From then on pay was whatever your qualifications were plus half-a-crown a day."

No pageantry for Churchill

WHEN S/M Ernie Southon, of the **D-Boats Association**, read our *Heroes of the Royal Navy* tribute to Winston Churchill in February's *Navy News*, it brought back a particular memory.

In an anecdote he originally passed to the D-Boats Association magazine, Ernie recalls: "Just finished training – Dunkirk problem over – in Pompey Barracks, day and night air raids are just starting.

"Early one morning about 16 of us are sent to Dockyard at the South Railway Jetty where there were three French destroyers, Le Cordellier, Le Melpomene and Le Branlebas, tied up alongside each other.

"Also in harbour was the battleship Courbet and a cruiser.

"After a few days spent sorting out some of the problems with at least half of the French sailors leaving (France was still deciding what to do re the war), 16 of us were told Le Cordellier was to be our ship.

"It had been commissioned in 1938 and was not particularly clean.

"However, the regular RN seamen-stoker types soon had the ship ready for sea.

"I got a promotion to 'Captain of the Heads' – the toilets were holes in the floor and footplates and handles to grip.

"General de Gaulle had just been made leader of the Free French forces.

"Deck hands falling in one morning, a No. 1 said: 'All in number ones and fall in on the jetty' and about 40 of us from the three ships did.

"Then quite a lot of English and French officers, and – yes – de Gaulle himself, inspected us.

"De Gaulle spoke mainly to the French lads, the ones who had decided to stay.

"Next day, same routine, but this time all British officers and 'bigwigs' with King George VI.

"We were inspected and spoken to by the King himself.

"Third morning, again on the jetty and waiting when we see an elderly gentleman shuffling towards us on his own, wearing an old sea cap and a short sea coat, smoking a cigar.

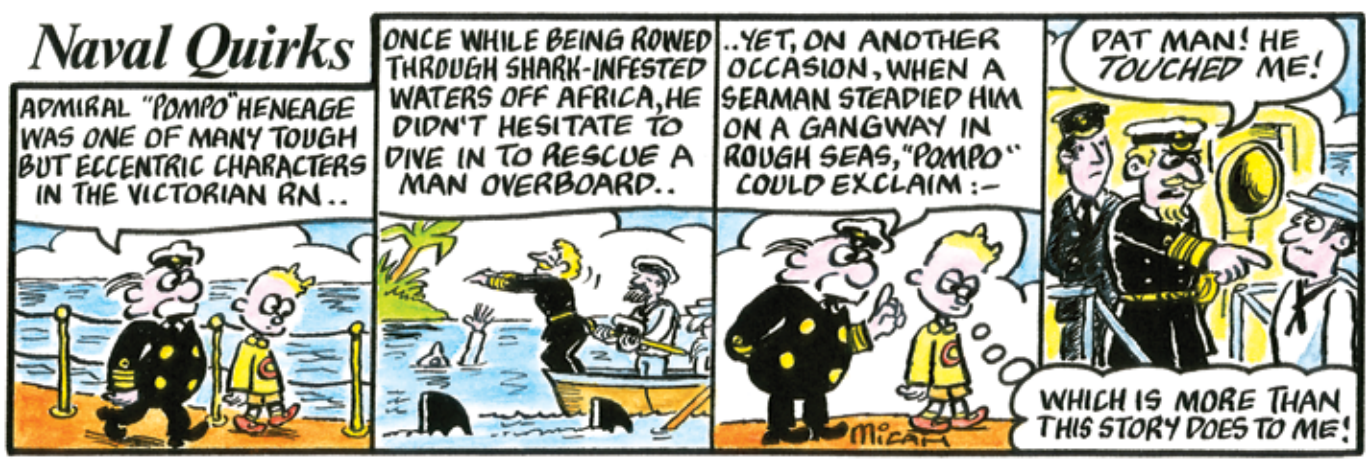
"As he got near us he said: 'What are you lot doing standing here – don't you know there's a war on?

"Get back to work, that's what I'm doing.

"I'm going on board to have a tot then I'm back to work."

"The last I saw of him was him climbing the bridge ladder. That was it.

"A truly great man…"



HQ open days

FOR those of you who wonder what goes on at RNA Headquarters in Portsmouth, now you have the chance to find out.

HQ at Semaphore Tower will be holding two open days, on Friday May 20 and Friday September 16, starting at 11am on each day for about an hour and a half.

So if you would like to see the heart of the RNA, and meet the staff who keep it beating, register your interest with Nigel Huxtable on 023 9272 3747 or email nigel@royalnavalassoc.com

Bell to go on display at civic hall

FOLLOWING the visit to **Leeds No 1 (Headingley)** branch by members of the ship's company of HMS Ark Royal, as reported in our April edition, the branch has handed items of seafaring memorabilia over to the local authority for safekeeping.

The Lord and Lady Mayoress of the City of Leeds, Cllr James McKenna and Cllr Andrea McKenna, attended a branch meeting to accept, on the council's behalf, the branch's Commissioning Bell and silver salver referred to last month.

The salver was originally a gift to the Chiefs and POs Mess in the Ark by members of the branch in 1992, which was returned by the ship's company.

Cllr McKenna indicated that the items would be kept on display in the Blue Room at the Civic Hall which, with the approval of the full council, could be renamed the Ark Royal Suite.

The room may also contain a large-scale model of Ark Royal.

Putting Wrens in the picture

NEXT April the **Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust** will celebrate its 70th anniversary, and is looking to produce a commemorative book about the work of the Trust over the past seven decades, which is hoped can be supported by some good-quality photographs of Wrens at work and play over the same period.

The WRNSBT is asking if anyone has such items, could they send a copy by post or email so that the original items are not placed at risk – any original photos cannot be returned unless they are accompanied by an appropriately stamped addressed envelope.

The date and location of any pictures provided would be useful, as would be the names of any people depicted.

Contributions should be sent to Sarah Ayton, General Secretary, WRNSBT, Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN, or by email to generalsecretary@wrnsbt.org.uk by June 30

Any suggestions for an eye-catching title would also be welcomed.

You will be able to order a copy of this book later in the year – details will be posted on the www.wrnsbt.org.uk website when finalised.

All profits from the book will go to the Trust.

Tiger team gets together

TWO reunion events in one covering sailors from **HMS Tiger** were deemed a big success by those who attended.

Communications ratings who served onboard the post-war helicopter cruiser between 1974 and 1978 enjoyed an informal get-together at the Nautical Club in Birmingham.

And one of the organisers, former RO1(T) Phil Tootill, said the club looked after them very well, and recommends a visit to anyone with an interest in Naval matters and memorabilia.

The main reunion was held at the sports and social club of the West Midlands police training centre in Edgbaston, where once again the level of service could not be faulted.

S/M Phil now hopes that those who attended will keep in touch – and that they will not allow another 32 years to pass before they gather once more to remember their old ship, one of an original class of three 'Ugly Ducklings' (HMS Blake also served in the Fleet, but HMS Lion never quite made it), so-called because of their ungainly appearance.

Campaigns take shape

WITH National Conference looming large on the calendar, delegates will be hearing about a flurry of activity in four key areas.

General Secretary S/M Paul Quinn has been overseeing projects which will overhaul:

- Corporate materials, including the RNA logo;
- A new and refreshed website;
- A member-get-member recruiting campaign, aimed at those who have left the Service;
- A shipmates recruitment campaign, aimed at those due to leave the Service.

Details of all these campaigns, plus other initiatives, will be examined in details in future editions of *Navy News*.

But all four campaigns described above have been given the green light by the National Council and will get their formal launch at National Conference in Plymouth next month.

S/M Quinn has also appealed for high-resolution pictures which demonstrate the four core values – unity, loyalty, patriotism and comradeship – taken at social events or when helping Service personnel.

S/M Quinn said he is not looking for photographs taken at ceremonial events, and added: "Mostly I'd love pictures of people enjoying themselves."

Any such pictures should be sent to the General Secretary at Semaphore Tower.

Room for more

THE National Memorial Arboretum expects to set a record this year for unveiling new memorials.

With 165 on site at the turn of the year, more than 40 were set to be completed or dedicated in the first part of 2011, with new applications from veterans' groups arriving every week.

Paul Kennedy, the curator of the Arboretum – which comes under the umbrella of the Royal British Legion – said there was room for plenty more on the 150-acre site at Alrewas in Staffordshire.

Saved by a shark, tormented by peas

LAST month we reported the story of Jack Woodcraft, who survived the sinking of his ship HMS Cornwall and managed to escape the sharks which circled below him and his shipwrecked colleagues.

That story prompted Royal Navy diver Jim Hutchison, of the **HMS Phoebe Association**, to contact us to tell of the time he was shipwrecked off the Congo estuary – and a shark saved his life.

"I joined the Dido-class cruiser HMS Phoebe on May 28 1942, the day after I was married to my wife Violet.

"I joined the ship in Chatham and we sailed to South Africa to search for Japanese raiders which were known to be operating in the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans.

"On one day, while we were in Simons Town Harbour I was carrying out a monthly dive when I was suddenly called to the surface and was lifted with the dive boat, still in my standard helmet gear, as the ship was in such a hurry to leave.

"We were going to the Sicily Landings and as a light cruiser we were calling at Pointe-Noire on the West Coast of Africa to refuel.

"We met up with another Dido-class ship, HMS Sirius, who was also to refuel and as senior ship was in front of Phoebe.

"About eight miles from the harbour Phoebe was torpedoed by U-161, on October 23 1942.

"The ship was badly damaged, with a hole 40ft by 30ft on the port side; 56 of the crew were killed and 40 injured.

"I was on the upper deck directly over where the torpedo struck, and I was blown 60ft in the air, and landed in the water.

"I was wounded, and the ship had disappeared – it had gone to bury some of the crew that had been killed as there was no sign of it when I found myself with two more of the crew with me.

"I was feeling pretty groggy as I had swallowed oil that was in the water from one of the oil tanks on the ship which had been blown apart by the torpedo.

"I don't know how long I was in the water but I know I was feeling so rough I was ready to give up but as I was swimming I suddenly saw something floating close by and I thought if that is afloat I'll hang on to it and hope I, with the other two, would be picked up.

"When I got to it I saw it was a shark and could see it appeared to be dead.



● *Jim Hutchison being slung out from HMS Phoebe at Pointe Noire*

"I guessed it had been close to the ship when the torpedo hit and was killed by the explosion.

"I made sure I hung on to the tail, just in case, and I hung on to it for about one-and-a-half hours before I was picked up, so am I the only person whose life has been saved by a shark?"

The strange occurrences did not finish there.

"There was one funny thing happened after I was recovered.

"There was an American hospital at Pointe-Noire, and an American aircraft used to land there to refuel after flying from America.

"One of the doctors came down to help our doctor with the wounded, and I was lying on a stretcher on the beach waiting for an ambulance to take me to the hospital.

"The doctor came along and asked me how I was. I told him I had swallowed oil but my feet were really hurting so he took off my shoes and socks – and started laughing.

"It appears when I landed in the water, where I went in, one of the ship's store rooms had been blown out.

"What had happened was that I must have landed head-first in the water from 60ft, and must have gone through some of the stores.

"My shoes had filled with split peas and tea which, being in the water, had started to swell and were forced against my feet by my shoes, causing me pain.

"Once the doctor had taken off my shoes and socks it felt much better, and most of the pain was gone, much to my relief.

"Incidentally, U-161 was sunk by an American flying boat in September 1943, lost with all hands."

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our March edition *(right)* was HMS Acasta, which was lost along with HMS Glorious, the aircraft carrier she was escorting.

The winner of our £50 prize was M Milham of Broadstairs in Kent.

This month's mystery ship *(pictured above)* was built in the middle of the war as a destroyer but ended her life almost a quarter of a century later as a frigate.

She saw action during World War 2 in home waters and the Indian Ocean, and was finally scrapped in the mid-1960s.

We have removed her pennant number from the picture which shows her after her conversion, moving – appropriately for her name – at high speed and leaving a trail.

What was her name?

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, *Navy News*, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH. Coupons giving the correct answer will go into a prize draw to establish a winner. Closing date for entries is June 15 2011. More than one entry can be submitted but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our July edition. The competition is not open to *Navy News* employees or their families.



MYSTERY PICTURE 195

Name

Address

.....

.....

My answer

Chance to look at Mt Wise

WITH a World War 2 bunker and a warren of underground tunnels housing communications, Mount Wise in Plymouth was a hub of Naval activity.

Previously owned by the Ministry of Defence, the site was in use for more than 200 years, until 2004.

The team behind Mount Wise is now calling forth all people with links to the site, and veterans plan to hold a reunion event this summer.

Did you or someone you know work or stay in Admiralty House? Perhaps you were a member of the military based on site, or you attended one of the many events in the striking ballroom?

Or perhaps you are a veteran who never got the chance to see Admiralty House for yourself?

Cdr Charles Crichton, who spent many an evening in Admiralty House during his years of service in the Royal Navy, is helping the Mount Wise events team to organise the reunion, inviting those he has remained in contact with from his time at Mount Wise.

The event will take place in June, coinciding with Plymouth's Armed Forces Week, and will be hosted by the Federation of Plymouth and District Ex-Services Association, with music by Plymouth Youth Music Service.

Those who wish to attend should contact Georgina Bray on 01752 608975 or email events@mountwise.co.uk for further details.

Tickets are free and will be supplied by the events team at Mount Wise.



Horsham thriving second time round

HORSHAM branch may only date back to 1993 in its present guise, but it has a little bit of history behind it.

In fact, Horsham claims to be one of the original branches which commissioned in 1952, but it fell upon hard times in the mid-1970s when it lapsed.

But now, eight years into its second appearance, the branch has almost 50 members who play an active role in fundraising, supporting RN HQ in Portsmouth and generally playing their part in **Area 3**.

Pictured above is Rear Admiral Peter Dingemans, a Falklands veteran and Horsham branch president, being presented with honorary life membership of the Association by S/M Peter Beeston, branch chairman – the picture was taken by S/M Alan Peckett in the RAFA Club in Horsham.

Cycle of success

A TEAM of medical military personnel static-cycled more than 880 miles in 24 hours in the atrium of Peterborough City Hospital to raise money for the town's new war memorial.

They decided on 880 miles as it is the distance travelled if one was to visit all the other hospitals in the United Kingdom which have military medical personnel as part of the team.

And as the cycling team completed their challenge, members of **Peterborough** branch were there to salute them with their standard, along with colleagues from the Peterborough Royal British Legion, Yaxley and District RBL, the Royal Air Force Association and the Royal Artillery.

Tribute is paid to 40 Cdo

40 COMMANDO Royal Marines returned from Afghanistan after a gruelling deployment which cost them many wounded and 14 dead.

At the end of March **40 Commando Association** went to Manchester for their annual reunion – an ideal opportunity, said Ken Brotherhood, of the Manchester and Salford branch of the Royal Marines Association, to pay tribute to those members of 40 Cdo who lost their lives.

"Manchester City Council gave us permission to hold a memorial at the Cenotaph in St Peters Square, and the Lord Mayor, Cllr John Hackett, kindly agreed to be guest of honour.

"At 10.30am on the Sunday, the parade formed up for the simple ceremony.

"WO1 Ted Gillespie, RSM of 40 Cdo, along with two other serving members, represented the unit.

"WO2 Alan Starr, Sgt Maj of Mandet, and Sgt Smith, both of whom served with 40, were there on behalf of the RMR and there was a good turnout of former 40 Cdo members from the Association and three members of Manchester and Salford branch of the RMA.

"Our chairman, Stan Hocking, was among the standard bearers.

"Wreaths were laid on behalf of 40 Cdo, the RMA, 40 Association and our branch.

"Then the names of all 14 we were honouring were read out loud and individual poppy crosses laid as the *Last Post* and *Reveille* were sounded and the Benyon exhortation was spoken.

"After the parade the Lord Mayor kindly invited all present back to his parlour for a warming cup of tea and a chance to see the portrait there of C/Sgt Prettyjohns, the first Victoria Cross winner from the Corps.

"After his service he came to live and work in Manchester and died there.

"We owe the Lord Mayor our thanks for his hospitality."

One of those on parade that day – and interviewed by the BBC - was 74-year-old National Serviceman Ron Hey, who landed at Port Said with 40 Cdo in 1956.

His son, LET Andy 'Ucks' Hey, featured in December's *Navy News*, as a member of the crew of HMS Sceptre.

Engineers honoured

A NEW memorial to Royal Naval Engineers is to be dedicated at the National Memorial Arboretum in October.

The **Royal Naval Engineers Benevolent Society** have finalised details for the programme, on Saturday October 1.

Attendees should meet outside the Visitors Centre at the Alrewas Arboretum at 10.30am, with an act of remembrance starting at the chapel at 11am.

On conclusion the attendees will make their way to the RN Engineers Memorial, where the dedication will take place at 11.45am.

Lunch is available in the Visitors Centre restaurant – to be paid for by individuals – with the programme finishing at 2pm.

Change at top

THE chairman of the **City of Glasgow** branch has handed over the reins to a shipmate.

S/M Frank Halliday has resigned after 14 years in the hot seat, taking parades and an assortment of other duties.

Frank was always at the forefront of everything the branch was involved in, be it dances, cadet links or social events.

He is succeeded by S/M Kenn McKinnon.

Frank was presented with a silver hip flask from shipmates as a token of their esteem – and also received a good tot of rum to put in it.

NFF helps you keep up with the pace of change

Celebrating with the Royals

PRINCE William and Miss Catherine Middleton – who will be married by the time this issue of *Navy News* is on sale – have set up a charitable fund for those who may wish to donate to celebrate their wedding.

The couple have chosen the charities themselves to reflect their own interests and many are little known and without existing Royal Patronage.

The charities are grouped into five areas, and people making a donation can choose the group they wish to support. One of those areas highlighted by the couple is support for Service personnel and their families.

In addition, the chosen good causes include some based in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, showing the couple's close ties to those nations.

Donations can be made through www.royalweddingcharityfund.org, which includes a full list of the charities.

Third report from the SCC

THE Independent Service Complaints Commissioner (SCC), Dr Susan Atkins, released at the end of March her third annual report on the fairness and effectiveness of the Service complaints process.

The report details the improvements made to the MOD's complaints system, however one area of concern remains the timeliness of complaints handling.

The Commissioner has recommended a fundamental review of the complaints process, and has proposed the creation of an Ombudsman model for the Armed Forces.

She has set out four goals for the system to achieve by the beginning of 2014:

- 90 per cent of all complaints from Service personnel completed within 24 weeks in the internal system
- significant and continued reductions in reports of bullying, harrassment, discimination and victimisation
- complaints within a specialist procedure (ie pay and allowances, housing, education and medical treatment) dealt with in a timely and fair manner
- SCC judged by Services, families, ministers and parliament to be playing an effective role

The MOD has welcomed the report – full details of which can be found online at http://armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk/

Defence is our business

THE MOD has announced its intention to bring together its corporate services into the Defence Business Services organisation.

Initially this will include the majority of the civilian HR staff including PPPA personnel, 900 finance staff, some information services staff and a small number of commercial staff.

In the autumn this year the security vetting of the DVA will move into this organisation, subject to approval of the decision to create a single vetting provider.

And in 2013 the military HR functions provided by the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency are proposed to be included.

Defence Business Services will be ready to stand up on July 1, employing 2,000 staff or more.

End-users will receive similar levels of service as previously, but delivered in a different manner.

By making these changes, the MOD expects to reduce the net costs of providing corporate services by some £73 million each year.

More information can be found in DIB 11/24b or on the Transforming Defence portal.

WE WOULD had to have been sitting under a rock not to have been caught up in the announcements that have been coming thick and fast over the last few weeks..., *writes Jane Williams of the Naval Families Federation*.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body have announced their recommendations, all of which have been adopted and most implemented as of April 1, then came the tweaks on Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA), again all of which have been implemented as of April 1, this then was swiftly followed by the DIN announcing the first tranche of the redundancy programme.

In between this came the formation of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, who have evolved from Defence Estates Ops Housing.

Work is already in hand to shape what the next generation of estates contracts will deliver, this will sit alongside whoever is appointed as the National Housing prime contractor (the maintainer of Service Families Accommodation) and the New Employment Model.

Whilst approx 5,000 SFA are allocated to serving Royal Naval and Royal Marines personnel and their families across the UK estate, the future shape of allocations, maintenance and entitlement is being worked on for all three Services.

There is a huge appetite for guidance on what families want, how they want it delivered and who is going to deliver it, which is where we strongly recommend that all families should play their part in informing these decisions.

The NFF has been invited to sit around the table and feedback all the views of Naval Service families, whether you are currently living in SFA or may need to take it up at some point in the future.

We are undertaking a comprehensive list of events designed to pick up feedback and viewpoints, so the plea is to keep a watch out either through your letterbox, our website, community centre events or via Homeport over the coming weeks, and get your views registered.

As you move towards planning summer moves, we have been asked to highlight the following by DIO OPS Accommodation –Applications for SFA: JSP464 requires Serving Personnel to apply for SFA within two weeks of receipt of their JPA assignment order.

However, of the 17,000 applications received in FY10/11, only 38.7 per cent were submitted within three weeks of the issue of the assignment notification; the majority of applications took longer than five weeks.

The picture of what is available to incoming families is therefore not as clear as it could be.

The use of the e1132 (the on-line version of 1132) speeds the process up considerably, so all applicants are requested, where possible, to channel the application via the electronic route.

Defence Select Committee

In April the three Families Federations were invited to give evidence to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee inquiry into the level of support provided to the bereaved and seriously injured and, just as importantly, to their families.

We understand that this is the first in a series of welfare-related Inquiries by the Select Committee and we welcomed the opportunity to represent views on this important aspect of Royal Naval and Royal Marines welfare support.

This would not have been possible without the feedback from some pretty terrific families. We know who they are, they know who they are.

We would like to say: "Thank you, without your input the committee would not have had such a good picture of how we are doing so far and where we could do better."

If you have any contribution or comment you would like the NFF to carry forward please get in touch: admin@nff.org.uk

Support for Families of Deployed Personnel

A nationwide support program is available to Forces families during the major deployment to Afghanistan – the idea is to keep families informed of Service developments and provide an opportunity to meet others in a similar circumstance and make new friends.

There will be a specific focus on those living in more remote areas, away from the normal support structures and their extended families.

Events have been set up by the Naval Personal & Family Service (NPFS), Royal Marines Welfare (RMW) and Friends and Families of Deployed Units (FAFDU).

Venues include Cardiff, Yeovil, Bristol, Taunton, Culdrose, Birmingham and more.

For more information please contact Dan Richmond, Naval Area Community Officer on: 01752 347886.

Armed Forces Pay Review Body Report 2011

The 40th Annual Report acknowledges not only all the invaluable feedback from its site visits but also notes the feedback Naval families have provided via the NFF:

"Motivation and morale – We received formal written and oral evidence from the Service Families' Federations on the motivation and morale of personnel; this supplemented the views we heard on visits.

"Common themes included: the continued high operational tempo and its impact on family life; concerns about employment security post-SDSR; changes to the allowances package and the value of the pension; poor quality accommodation and maintenance; and poor communication from MOD.

"Evidence received from the Service Families' Federations – Families regard the Armed Forces pension highly and feel that it has an important role in determining how long an individual is prepared to serve.

"The Federations consider that the pension acts as a strong pull factor, retaining personnel until the date they can access Early Departure Payments (EDPs).

"However, once they have reached that stage, the pension may act as a push factor as personnel compare the disadvantages of continuing with a military career to the advantages of a second career in civilian life, supplemented by the lump sum and EDPs.

"When so many Service personnel and their families have bad experiences with the maintenance of their accommodation, there are likely to be effects on morale and on retention.

"We therefore welcome DE's recognition of the continuing importance of this issue.

"MOD must secure service improvements through better contract management.

"We look forward to seeing evidence of progress in our next round of visits and in the evidence we receive from the Service Families' Federations."

Please keep your feedback coming, whether it be on a case by case basis or by taking part in the Next Generation Estates Contracts questions that we are about to put forward.

Continuity of Education Allowance

The changes that came into effect on April 1 for all CEA claimants are available on the NFF website: www.nff.org.uk

The information available includes an FAQ section, one example being:

Q. What if I choose to retain SFA/SSFA at my previous Duty Station/Naval Base Port Area?

A. CEA is related to the mobility of the family, not the Service person. Entitled families occupying SFA may retain their entitlement to SFA at the location of the SP's previous assignment.

However, SFA may be provided at the new Duty Station (Base Port for ships and submarines) provided the entitlement criteria are met.

By choosing not to move the family home to the new Duty Station despite having signed a CEA Eligibility Certificate, the Service person is failing to comply with the principle of accompanied service and family mobility and would not meet the requirements of the policy intent.

The Service person is exercising personal choice by electing not to relocate their family to the new Duty Station; granting CEA in such circumstances would call into question the integrity of CEA as an allowance designed to provide continuity of education during periods of family mobility.

A dedicated CEA team will be established under the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (SPVA) to ensure probity and compliance with the CEA regulations.

Your experiences form the basis of all our discussions, to get in touch with the NFF, tel; 02392 654374, e-mail Admin@nff.org.uk or write to us at:

NFF
Castaway House
311 Twyford Avenue,
Portsmouth, PO2 8RN.

Redundancy cell update

We know at the Naval Families Federation that one of the key issues worrying you, the families, is the issue of redundancy – so we sought this update from the Fleet Redundancy Cell.

THE LAST few weeks have been extraordinarily busy for the Fleet Redundancy Cell (FRC) as we have both formed the Cell and developed the business processes in short order ready for the release of the Naval Service Redundancy Programme DIN (2011DIN01-100) on April 4, *writes Lt Cdr Andrew Free*.

Our key aim is to provide all personnel with the information that they require to understand how the redundancy programme affects them.

The FRC has a dedicated telephone number (93832 8987 or 023 9262 8987) and a group mailbox (FLEET-REDUNDANCY CELL MAILBOX or FLEET-REDUNDANCYCELLMAILBOX@mod.uk) and welcomes all enquiries.

Although there is one telephone number and one e-mail address, there are eight members of the team to answer your calls and e-mails.

Naturally the team will expect you to have read the DIN and the FAQs first, so please do visit the Redundancy web pages (on either the Defence Intranet or RNCom) before contacting them.

Don't forget to let your families know that they can contact the Naval Families' Federation for information and advice.

They can also access the RNCom Redundancy web pages which broadly contain the same information as that on the Defence Intranet.

Please note that the closing date for applications for compulsory redundancy is May 16 2011.

If you suspect that your written hardcopy application form may not reach us before then, please let us know by telephone or e-mail before the closing date.

Before submitting an application for compulsory redundancy, please make sure you fully understand the implications of applying for redundancy as stated in the DIN.

If you're unsure, contact the Cell.

Unfortunately, some personnel have made enquiries and submitted application forms when they are clearly not in fields.

This creates nugatory work for the team; so please check carefully before submitting an application form.

Remember, if you are not in a redundancy field, you are not able to apply, and you will not be considered for redundancy.

The Armed Forces Redundancy Calculator has been very busy, and I am pleased to say there have been very few problems reported.

Finally, the Fleet Redundancy Team exists to serve you, so please contact us if you have any questions, queries or concerns about how the redundancy programme affects you.

2SL Easter message

THE Second Sea Lord, Vice Admiral Charles Montgomery, has sent out a message of appreciation and support to the people of the Royal Navy amid these challenging times.

The admiral acknowledges that personnel might be feeling somewhat bruised after recent announcements, but states his aim to create stability wherever possible and restore normality in careers across the Naval Service.

He praises the way that those at the waterfront, in shore establishments and air stations, have worked to deal with the inflow of people, their flexibility and willingness to embrace this burden.

The admiral highlights the positive developments of the protection of accrued pension rights, the improved AFCS, and the rebuilding of the military covenant.

He concludes: "One need not look beyond the daily newspapers to see just how much our Service is doing at the moment, across the world.

"In Afghanistan, off Libya, in the Gulf, off Somalia and in the Caribbean, as well as being involved in many other operations and exercises, our people really are making a difference.

"It is impossible not to feel immensely proud of a Service that does so much so well in such difficult times."

Your attitude on the record

THE END of March saw the publication of the latest Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey. Last year's survey had the highest response rate that the AFCAS has produced at 42 per cent.

2010 was a period of some uncertainty with changes anticipated and announced in the Strategic Defence and Security Review, however morale was high for the majority (52 per cent) for the first time.

As in 2009, 85 per cent of personnel stated that they were proud to be in the Service. Almost two-thirds of respondents said that they were satisfied with their job in general. But only 38 per cent reported feeling valued.

With regards to pay, satisfaction on specialist pay, pensions and allowances remains at steady state, and in terms of basic pay have increased by 3 per cent.

The majority of respondents stated that the frequency and length of operational deployments was about right.

And satisfaction levels with the standard and amount of major equipment have upped by 5 per cent to 40 per cent and 38 per cent respectively.

You can find more details in DIB 30/11; or online on the DASA website www.dasa.mod.uk.

Pensions reshaped

THE military have been highlighted as a particular area of consideration by the Government while accepting the recommendations of Lord Hutton's commission into Public Service Pensions.

Later this year the Government will set out its proposals that are affordable and fair to both public sector workforce and taxpayers.

The final report of the Will Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector was published on March 15, and the Government has accepted this as setting a basis for senior pay in the public sector.

The Pension Tax Relief Annual Allowance (AA) was reduced from £255,000 to £50,000 from last month.

Most personnel will not be affected, but promotions beyond OF3 and annual increments for Senior Flag and General Officers will be susceptible to an excess pension increase and could incur a tax bill from 2011/12.

where to look

DEFENCE INTERNAL BRIEFS

13/11: Armed Forces Day 2011: This year, Armed Forces Day (AFD) will be held on Saturday June 25. Now in its third year, the aim of AFD is to boost public support and appreciation of all those who serve and have served in Armed Forces (serving personnel, veterans and cadets).

16/11: Armed Forces Compensation Scheme - new legislation completes implementation of the Boyce Review: It is one year on from the publication of the Review into the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) by Admiral the Lord Boyce. Following the laying of new legislation in February, all of the improvements that the Review recommended have now been made to the Scheme, creating an even more comprehensive compensation package for those injured as a result of their military service.

22/11: Armed Forces Pay Award 2011: The 2011 report of the Armed Forces' Pay Review Body (AFPRB) has been published. The Government has accepted the recommendations in full with implementation effective from April 1 2011. Personnel will see the impact of the award in their Apr 2011 pay statements.

GALAXIES

Galaxy 12-2011: Initial Naval Training

Galaxy 11-2011: HMRC policy changes to Pension Tax Relief annual allowance: Personal note from 2SL

Galaxy 10-2011: Navy Command Review

Galay 09-2011: Ice Patrol Ship (interim replacement) – HMS Protector

Galaxy 08-2011: Armed Forces Pay Review Body 2011 Report

DEFENCE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTICES

DIN 2011 DIN01-100: Naval Service Redundancy Programme.

DIN 2011 DIN01-104: Volunteers for United Kingdom Special Forces Group (UKSF) This DIN supersedes DIN 2010DIN01-201

DIN 2011 DIN01-106: Pension Tax Relief Annual Allowance - Scheme Pays

DIN 2011 DIN02-007: Access Control Policy – Veiled Females

DIN 2011 DIN04-054: Introduction of the Sight Unit Small Arms Trilux to the RN

DIN 2011 DIN06-007: Screening for genital chlamydial infection (chlamydia) in Armed Forces personnel and entitled dependants

ROYAL NAVY TEMPORARY MEMORANDA

Issue 07/11 RNTM 127/11: Exercise Joint Caterer Competition 2011 – CSCC 2011

Issue 07/11 RNTM 125/11: HMS Drake Navy Health Centre: Limited Services May 2011

Issue 07/11 RNTM 121/11: Fleet Air Arm Warfare Branch - Changes to Accelerated Incremental Progression Qualifications

Issue 06/11 RNTM 119/11: Recruiting for the RN Family Services Branch and Royal Marines Welfare

Issue 06/11 RNTM 110/11: Status of Recruiting into Sideways Entry Branches and Opportunities for Branch Transfers

Issue 05/11 RNTM 095/11: Fires & Floods Reported in HM Ships, Submarines and RFAs - Analysis for 2010

Issue 05/11 RNTM 092/11: RN & RM Charity – Subsidised Holidays in France – 2011 Season

Issue 05/11 RNTM 090/11: Naval Service Sky TV for Ships Recreational Systems (SRE) and Ship-Along-Side (SAS) Entitlement & Demand Process

Issue 04/11 RNTM 076/11: RN Photographic Competition 2011

where to look

Armed Forces pay update

DETAILS of the Armed Forces Pay award have been published; and the Government accepted the recommendations in full.

Last year's Emergency Budget brought a two-year pay freeze from 2011 for all public sector employees.

However the Government did state that all those earning £21,000 or less should receive a minimum salary increase of £250.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body recommended an increase for all military personnnel, inclusive of X-Factor.

Additionally the AFPRB recommended targeted pay measures for specific trades (including EOD operators and Royal Marine Mountain Leaders), and an increase to the Daily Food Charge and some accommodation charges.

The lowest level of specialist pay for EOD operators has been removed, and a new level introduced. This means that the Level 1 rate has been removed; the Level 2 rate has gone up by £1.22 to £16.38; the introduction of a new Level 2A rate of £21.82,; and a raise of almost £8 for Level 3 to £27.87.

Royal Marine Mountain Leaders at Level 1 will see an increase of almost 50 per cent, with a rate of £15.16; and the introduction of a new Level 2 rate of £20.60.

For other trades and ranks, the changes include:

■ The introduction of a new level of Specialist Pay (Nuclear Propulsion) for CAT C qualified Other Ranks of £2.42 per day.

■ The recalibration of existing levels of SP(SR) levels one to three for Officers on Appointment at £37.58, after three years at £44.24, and after six years at £47.88.

■ The recalibration of existing levels of SP(SR) levels for Other Ranks to, On Badging £18.43, after two years at £26.05, and after six years at £29.70.

■ The introduction of four higher levels of SP(SR) for Other Ranks, at nine years £36.36, at 12 years £39.38, at fifteen years £44.24, and at 18 years £47.88

■ The introduction of an advanced level of SP(SFC) at a daily rate of £20.60 and the extension of SP(SFC) Reserve qualified personnel.

■ The lower level of SP(SC) removed to give a single level for all of £11.52.

■ The introduction of a new level of SP(SI) for Basic Handlers of £12.12 and recalibration of existing level to £20.60 and £30.92.

Some Specialist Pay recommendations are expected to be paid in July 2011, backdated to April 1, with monthly payments thereafter.

Golden handcuffs in the form of Financial Retention Incentives will see the introduction of two new schemes for Marine Engineer Submariner post-Charge SO2s of £65,000 upon reaching the initial pension point for a five-year Return of Service and £35,000 five years later for a further five years ROS.

Existing FRIs for CAT A2 and B personnel will be retained, and a new £35,000 FRI for Marine Engineer Submariner CAT A2 personnel who requalify during extended commitment for a five-year ROS.

Among other allowances changed, Northern Ireland Residents' Supplement is being boosted to £7.29 per day.

Service Families Accommodation sees either no changes or ranges up to 34p per day. Although people in Single Living Accommodation will see their wallets boosted by 1p to 9p.

■ **For more information see DIB 2011/22**



BZ for Twosix.tv

Your *Twosix.tv*, the Royal Navy's internal communications DVD, beat 25 entries to win a bronze award for Regular Communications at the International Visual Communications Awards 2011.

The winners were announced on 25 March at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London. The award was received by Capt Andy Aspden (DMCPR Navy), Kate McIntyre, Pauline Aquilina (DMCPR Navy) and Miranda Counsell (CTN communications)

View your award winning programme at www.twosix.tv. All winning entries can be viewed at www.livca.org.

SDSR and the people effect

I AM sure that many of you will have heard about the government's recent Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and will be at least partially aware of its implications for the Royal Navy, *writes Cdr J E Gardner, Manpower Operations*.

In summary, the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal and the Type 22 frigates have, or will shortly be, decommissioned.

The Joint Force Harrier air stations at Cottesmore and Wittering are to be drawn down and eventually closed and the amphibious ship HMS Albion is to be placed into extended readiness, with only a skeleton crew assigned to her.

Additionally, the remaining Type 42 destroyers are to be decommissioned as we bring into service the new Daring-class destroyers.

So what are the implications of these decisions for our people?

Given the significant temporary migration of people from sea to shore and a significant movement of people from one shore base to another (especially from Cottesmore and Wittering to Culdrose and Yeovilton), two key issues have emerged: an imminent shortage of shore accommodation across all ranks and rates, and a short term shortage of jobs for some Able Ratings (ABs).

Both these issues will steadily be resolved over the next three years as we reduce the size of the Naval Service, either through people leaving or through a redundancy programme that is to be implemented, with the first redundancy group (Tranche) being informed on September 30.

In the short term therefore, we need to ensure that we can both suitably accommodate and gainfully employ all our people.

The impact of these issues will vary by location.

Although both Portsmouth and Devonport will see similar sized accommodation shortages, Portsmouth will have fewer job shortages than Devonport.

The former Joint Force Harrier community will, in the main, be redeployed to Culdrose and Yeovilton.

Faslane will be largely unaffected.

■ ***Accommodation***

How do we intend to resolve the accommodation issue?

Firstly, we have already started to re-assign Junior Ratings to their base port of choice if they own or rent private accommodation there.

Secondly, we have taken a long and hard look at identifying additional cabin space within our existing living quarters, which has resulted in the freeing up of a significant number of cabins.

All this has resulted in substantially easing the accommodation shortfall for officers, senior ratings and leading hands, but the sheer scale of the issue for able ratings requires the taking of further steps.

In this respect, Culdrose and Yeovilton have already led the way by converting Single Living Accommodation (SLA) cabins to dual occupancy.

HMS Nelson in Portsmouth will do the same, and in Devonport, HMS Raleigh will absorb any additional manpower in multi-occupancy messdecks.

Clearly, this is not an ideal solution for those who will have to share, but given the severe economic climate in which we currently find ourselves, more expensive solutions such as using hotel or private accommodation have had to be discounted.

Finally, the migration of people will also mean significant relocation for some of our families, and therefore the longer term impacts on Service Families' Accommodation availability is being assessed.

■ ***Employment***

A range of measures have been implemented to provide meaningful employment to those ABs who will temporarily be without permanent jobs.

These individuals are known as the 'SDSR Force Reduction Personnel'.

Yeovilton and Culdrose have already started to absorb the influx of personnel from Cottesmore and Wittering into both gapped billets and as temporary overbearing.

Yeovilton, Portsmouth and Devonport have set up dedicated management teams to lead, support and provide divisional care and employment opportunities for the pools of personnel, with Culdrose utilising existing management structures.

These Personnel Employment Pools have been given appropriate Squadron names – Hawkins Squadron in Devonport, Trafalgar Squadron in Portsmouth, and Sea Fury Squadron in Yeovilton.



Drafty's corner

The over-riding priority will be to re-assign these personnel to vacant posts as soon as possible, as well as re-training where appropriate, and reducing outstanding leave bills.

In the meantime, many will be utilised for augmentation for national military operations, exercises and events, as well as undertaking suitable employment in the vicinity of the naval bases and air stations.

However, please be reassured that people from decommissioned ships and units are no more liable than any other sailors to be made redundant.

For those of you reading this article who are serving in the RN, the detailed arrangements for what is described above are laid down in RNTM 054/11 Management of Force Reduction personnel.

■ ***Summary***

In summary, please be reassured that the welfare of our people is universally recognised and remain at the heart of the fighting effectiveness of the Naval Service.

The challenges imposed on our people by the Strategic Defence and Security Review have been identified and are being dealt with sensitively and effectively.

Further updates will be provided through local chains of command.

Tune into Twosix for a coaching update

COACHING is a leadership style that allows personnel development through the use of effective questions, *writes Lt Cdr Rachel Smallwood*, who is featured in this month's *Twosix.tv* dvd.

Many good leaders already coach their subordinates from induction, through the MPAR process and beyond.

The aim of using coaching techniques is to enable people to be the best they can be by unlocking their potential.

Almost 90 per cent of successful UK businesses use coaching as a common sense approach to help maximise effectiveness and efficiency; a result of improved well-being, and increased motivation of the individual, team, and organization to achieve their potential.

Widespread recognition and adoption of coaching techniques in the Naval Service will reap many rewards, including improved motivation, improved learning and training outcomes, improved capabilities, enhanced job satisfaction, rewarding careers and, therefore, improved retention of suitably skilled, qualified and experienced personnel.

The implementation plan to achieve this is in three stages: buy-in; delivery; and evaluation.

For the delivery part of the plan, all Naval Service personnel from Leading Hand and Corporal upwards will participate in an hour-long coaching workshop between April 2011 and September 2012, to introduce the two models that have been endorsed for use: the GROW model, and the Effective Feedback model.

The GROW model is all about setting goals or objectives and enabling people to achieve them.

A JPA Coaching competency is awarded to all participants.

More details can be found in DIN: 2011DIN01-073, and watch this month's *Twosix.tv* for an introduction.

Changes ahead at NC

NAVY Command Review (NCR) is a change programme that will restructure the Navy Command (NC) TLB in the wake of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and inform Naval Service and civilian manpower reductions.

Initial work is focused on examining the current organisation, and developing potential options to change these once the outcome of the ongoing, higher-level Defence Reform Review (DRR) is known; this is anticipated in July 2011.

Subsequent work will refine these options for decision on a new organisation structure later in the year or early 2012. Once a new structure has been agreed then clarity on individual posts will become available.

The NCR was established in November 2010 in order to draw together all change programmes; conduct a post-project review of the transformed and leaned NCHQ (including Battlestaffs and Flotillas); and to take stock of the manpower drawdown. It is examining civilian and Naval Service posts across Navy Command.

More information will be issued as it becomes available.

Training revamp for all

AS PART of the continued drive to deliver better, more effective and efficient training, the Navy Board has endorsed the concept of Initial Naval Training (INT); a common package of core naval training delivered to all Royal Navy Phase 1 trainees but with separate officer and rating classes.

In order to move towards this head-mark both officers' and ratings' Phase 1 training is being redesigned based on revised Operational Performance Statements for officers and ratings.

Common elements have been identified which underpin the INT concept, particularly the introduction of Core Maritime Skills (CMS).

Initial Naval Training (Ratings) (INT(R)), a ten-week course, will be delivered at HMS Raleigh from this month. It will be split into Militarisation, Marinisation and Confirmation phases and will embed CMS.

For officers, INT(O) will be delivered at BRNC from Jan 2012; this is likely to be 30 weeks in length, will include CMS, enhanced Command, Leadership and Management training and Initial Fleet Training.

The very clear aim is for INT(O) to be conducted to the same framework as INT(R), maximising the commonality in content and facilities and paving the way for more efficient collocated training in the future, dependent on the appropriate resource being identified. This will be subject to further work.

In the meantime there is a continuing drive to better exploit the training facilities at BRNC and HMS Raleigh so that officers and ratings can benefit from each, maximising use and sharing best practice.

The training provided for Medical Officers, Senior Upper Yardmen and the Royal Naval Reserve will also be improved; Royal Marines initial training is unaffected.

More detail will be available as the INT project progresses and you will be kept informed through the appropriate internal communication channels.

NOTICEBOARD



● *HMS Caroline in her current Belfast home, photographed by PO Robbie Hodgson RNR*

Caroline battles for survival

THE last survivor of the greatest naval battle ever fought in European waters will be saved – but there's a multi-million-pound battle ahead to restore HMS Caroline.

The Great War cruiser – the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland and the only major warship left from the Grand Fleet, the greatest armada Britain ever possessed – will be taken over by the National Museum of the Royal Navy now she is no longer needed by the Royal Naval Reserve.

For nearly 90 years the warship has served as the base for part-time sailors in Belfast, but they have now moved ashore to HMS Hibernia, part of the Army's Thiepval barracks in Lisburn.

The White Ensign was lowered for the last time on Caroline on March 31 and formally presented to City of Belfast; it will be laid up alongside other military standards in St Anne's Cathedral.

Now she is due to be gifted to the National Museum – she remains in the hands of the MOD until Parliament formally approves the gift – so it can draw up a battle plan to preserve Caroline for future generations.

To meet the demands of her Royal Naval Reserve role, Caroline has been altered down the years – notably a rather incongruous drill hall and shed.

But much of the cruiser is as she was as an active warship – cabins, tiller flat, some of the engine compartments, tripod mast. Dr Dominic Tweddle, Director-General of the National Museum of the Royal Navy – the umbrella organisation for all four Senior Service museums (RN, Submarine, Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines) – says around 80 per cent of Caroline is original, which makes it vital that she is saved.

"Not only is she the most important warship still unprotected in Britain, she comes close to the top of the list of the world's ten warships that should be protected at all costs," he explained.

"She is the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland, and the last major ship to survive from the Grand Fleet. To stand on her bridge, with her tripod mast towering above you, is an unforgettable experience – and it is equally extraordinary to explore her galley, fitted out in 1914, or to sit in the doctor's surgery, or to walk into her steering flat."

The next step is to draw up a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and to talk with the authorities in Belfast with a view to keeping Caroline in Northern Ireland, although the ship is more important than the location – for now, the cruiser remains at her berth in Alexandra Dock, a stone's throw from where Titanic was built – so other berths are being considered.

"We are at the beginning of a long and hard road," said Dr Tweddle. "Saving historic ships is never easy, and raising money in the current economic conditions is doubly difficult. But to fail in this endeavour cannot be contemplated. HMS Caroline is the equal of one of our great cathedrals – if any one of them were threatened with destruction we would not hesitate."

Until the formal act of decommissioning, Caroline was the second oldest ship in Royal Navy service (surpassed only by Victory).

She's been in Belfast since April 1924 when, no longer needed by the front-line RN, she was turned into the headquarters of the then Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve in the newly-partitioned province.

The museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard has already taken her collection of around 400 items, which have remained with the ship throughout her service, into storage for security as well as for research and conservation, including her 1914 battle ensign.

The media war

THE story of war – as told through the eyes of the men and women reporting from the front line – comes under the spotlight in a unique exhibition opening in Manchester next month.

War Correspondent – Reporting Under Fire Since 1914 is the first major exhibition on the role of journalists who've put their lives on the line alongside soldiers, sailors and airmen from the Somme and Passchendaele to the Falklands, Gulf and Afghanistan.

The Imperial War Museum North is focusing in particular on the works of 12 famous correspondents – their reports (the printed word, radio reports and TV broadcasts), their equipment, clothing (including Martin Bell's trademark white suit), their brushes with death (such as the bullet which injured Kate Adie in the Lebanon).

As well as the contemporaneous accounts – including Brian Hanrahan's timeless "I counted them all out…" from HMS Hermes in the Falklands – IWM staff have interviewed some of the correspondents to look back on the reports from the front line and explain how they dealt with danger and the problems of censorship.

The dozen correspondents at the heart of the seven-month exhibition are: Philip Gibbs (WW1); Martha Gellhorn (Spanish Civil War); Clare Hollingworth, Alan Moorehead and the BBC's Richard Dimbleby (WW2); ITN's Michael Nicholson (Vietnam); the late Brian Hanrahan (Falklands); Kate Adie and Jeremy Bowen (Gulf War); Martin Bell (Balkans); Rageh Omaar (Iraq); and John Simpson (Afghanistan).

The exhibition coincides with the opening of the MediaCity development – a vast complex opposite the IWM which will be home to numerous departments of the BBC and ITV Granada.

Entry to the exhibition – and the rest of the museum – is free. *War Correspondent* runs from May 28 until January 2 2012.

1971 1981 1991 2001

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades…



● *Submarine HMS Opossum arrives in Portsmouth in April 1991*

May 1971

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Rapid, Lt Cdr Bill Kelly, was pictured throwing down the gauntlet (literally) to Cdr Snell, CO of HMS Cavalier, to see whose venerable warship would win a speed race in the Firth of Forth in the coming summer.

The destroyer Cavalier, then a stately 26 years old, and the frigate HMS Rapid, nearly 30, both claimed to be the Navy's fastest ship, with a steaming speed of well over 30 knots.

The initial challenge from Cavalier "We'll make you think you're standing still" sparked an exchange of Biblical claims and counter-claims between the ships, with Cavalier firing the signal 'Jeremiah 22-7' – "And I will prepare destroyers against thee, everyone with his weapons, and they shall cut down my choice cedars and cast them into the fire."

May 1981

SEA TRIALS were being planned for the Navy's second anti-submarine aircraft carrier, Illustrious, which was well on her way to being completed at the Walker Yard of Swan Hunter on the Tyne.

Illustrious was due to be accepted the following summer and her first Commanding Officer had already been appointed – Capt Jock Slater.

Capt Slater was the great-nephew of Admiral Lord Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief Mediterranean, who had ordered aircraft from the ship's famous predecessor and namesake to attack the Italian Fleet at Taranto in 1940.

May 1991

HM Submarines Opossum and Otus had returned to HMS Dolphin in Gosport within days of each other, both painted in distinctive duck egg blue and black livery and both, mysteriously, flying the Jolly Roger.

Opossum was returning after a rare round-the-world deployment which had begun in May 1990 and taken her to the Falklands, Pitcairn Islands, Tahiti, Australia, Java and Singapore.

Otus, who returned a few days later with Armed Forces Minister Archie Hamilton embarked, had been keeping a low profile for seven months and came in flying her decommissioning pennant and the Jolly Roger – so whatever she had been up to, it evidently wasn't a quiet run-down to retirement.

May 2001

AWARDS were announced for ten Royal Navy personnel for their part in operations in Sierra Leone which stemmed a rebel advance on the capital, Freetown.

The CO of HMS Chatham, Capt George Zambellas, was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his outstanding gallantry in negotiating difficult and dangerous uncharted waters to bring his ship up the Sierra Leone River to provide gunfire support to the Royal Marines ashore.

Major Phil Ashby RM, who had led an escape through the jungle after being captured by revolutionary United Front Forces the year before, was awarded a Queen's Gallantry Medal.

Deaths

Rear Admiral Brian Mungo. Graduated from the engineering college at Plymouth 1943 he was immediately appointed to Indomitable as flight deck engineer officer responsible for operation and maintenance of arrester wires, catapults, tractors and firefighting equipment. As part of Force H Indomitable took part in the invasion of Sicily where she was torpedoed; after repairs in America she delivered air strikes against Japanese targets then with the US 5th Fleet attacked Formosa, Okinawa and the Sakishimas; she was hit by a kamikaze aircraft and 14 men were killed but Mungo's team had the deck cleared within an hour. After the war he qualified as a pilot, worked with the Ministry of Supply at Farnborough then the Belfast aircraft repair yard. He was development project officer for the Scimitar jet fighter through to the first production aircraft that flew January 1957 and worked with the US Navy in Washington on the research and development of air weapons and aircraft cross-operations between NATO navies. After a tour as second-in-command of Sultan he worked within the Ministry of Aviation and completed two years in Rome as a faculty adviser at the NATO Staff College. Then was in charge of the FAA engineering standards, training and development on the staff of the Flag Officer Naval Air Command. Appointed CB in 1975 he retired in 1976. December 28. Aged 88.

Lt Cdr Barklie Lakin DSO, DSC*. Educated at Dartmouth he joined the submarine service in 1936. His first appointment was to the submarine Thetis but he was relieved by Lt Frederick Woods thus escaping its sinking in 1939; 99 crew and passengers died. When war broke out he was navigating officer in Ursula on patrol in the Heligoland Bight; he was mentioned in despatches in 1940 and won his first DSC in 1941 as first lieutenant of the submarine Utmost. After passing his Perisher course he briefly commanded the submarine H-43 then returned to Ursula as its captain during the Allied landings in North Africa. On his way back to Gibraltar he encountered U-73 on the surface and fired six torpedoes and was credited for its sinking; he collected a DSO. He was then ordered to the Gulf of Genoa with a detachment of commandos. The weather off the coast of France was too rough and he landed his commandos off Northern Italy where they blew up part of a railway line and Ursula shelled the overhead power cable. Next he met an anti-submarine schooner Togo which he engaged, boarded and captured her secret books. Moving south he entered the harbour on the surface at Maurizio and sent 25 shells into an oil-tank farm and shelled the pier. He sank a heavily escorted freighter and two days later carried out a moonlight attack on a convoy but in the process he was run down by a merchant ship which smashed both periscopes, took away the bridge and jammed the conning tower hatch. He headed for Algiers for emergency repairs, surfacing only at night to use Ursula's gyrocompass, his only navigational device; his crew called him 'Lucky Lakin'. While in command of the submarine Safari in 1943 he was awarded a bar to his DSC for a series of patrols sinking five ships of 11,950 tons, as well as six smaller vessels by gunfire; twice he returned from patrols having fired all his torpedoes and gun ammunition. For turning his submarine into a navigation beacon during the Allied landings on Sicily he was awarded the American Order of the Legion of Merit "for exceptionally meritorious conduct in maintaining his position in spite of enemy searchlights which played on his vessel from the beaches". After a lecture tour of the United States he was a liaison officer in the US Pacific Fleet, serving in the USN submarines Crevalle, Tinosa and Croaker and experienced his last depth-charging by the Japanese north of the Tsushima Straits in the Sea of Japan in July 1945. March 1. Aged 96.

William 'Bill' Howell. PO Radio Mechanic. HO rating. Served in Royal Arthur, Mercury and Comus. Remained with the MOD after leaving the RN and spent time in Diamond during NATO exercises in 1958 in his professional capacity. HMS Comus Association. February 24. Aged 84.

John May. AB RP3. Served HO 1945-48 in Boxer and Peacock then joined RN Fleet Reserve. Recalled 1950 due to the Korean War and served in Orsay, Tyne and Phoenicia leaving active service 1952. After a refresher training course in 1956 transferred to the RN Emergency Reserve Special List in 1958. HMS Peacock Association. January 3. Aged 84.

John Macleod. CPO. Joined as a Boy Seaman 2nd Class at St Vincent in 1936 serving three years Boys Time followed by 22 years Mans Time in Royal Sovereign, Revenge, Dorsetshire, Nimrod, Cormorant, Boscastle, Drake, Osprey, Vernon, Victory, Tiger and Consort (where as a CPO he served as the Buffer). A founder member of HMS Consort Association he was awarded Life Membership in 2008 and wrote many articles for the Consort Newsletter. March 15. Aged 90.

William 'Bill' Blackett. PO Stoker. Served 1940-45. Trained at Pembroke and served in Suffolk (1941-45); following discharge he served with the Royal Naval Reserves 1945 into the 50s. March 9. Aged 92.

Raymond Storey. AB. Served in Serene 1946 and a member of the association. November 2010.

Harold 'Harry' Ferris. CMT(O). Trained at RNH Haslar and served 1955-76 at RN Hospitals Plymouth, Bighi and Haslar also Seahawk and Carysfoot. Member of RNMBR & SBS Association. January 12. Aged 74.

Lt Norman F Green. Joined the RN as a Jnr A/Cook in 1953 and served 1957-62 in submarines Alaric, Trenchant and Andrew, also Russell, Adamant and Albion. Commissioned to Sy. S/Lt (Ck) in 1970 spending time at the Supply School at Chatham and served on the staff of FOST staff at Portland. Discharged as a Lieutenant 1975. March 9. Aged 74.

Robert Jay. CMT(P). Served 1949-76 in Implacable and Contest, Neptune, Nelson and RM Deal and RN Hospitals Haslar, Malta, Mauritius and Plymouth. Royal British Legion and Sick Berth Association. March 6. Aged 79.

Thomas Frederick Phethean RM. Served 1942-46. Enlisted into the Plymouth Division 188 and served on board Duke of York. Dumfries & Maxwelltown RBLS. 2010.

John McWilliam RM. Joined 1940 and served for 12 years. His training at Deal was interrupted when he was deployed to the Channel to repel the anticipated German invasion. Upon completion of his training he was posted to Prince of Wales for sea trials and took part in the chase to intercept the Bismarck and Prinz Eugen; after repairs in Rosyth he was on board to take Winston Churchill to Newfoundland for a meeting with President Franklin Roosevelt. In 1941 she was sunk by the Japanese but he was rescued and returned to Singapore. Here the Royal Marines joined up with the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders forming a unit named the Plymouth Argylls, as all 210 surviving Royal Marines were from the Plymouth Division, but after nine weeks the garrison surrendered and John was captured and taken to Changi prison, then to the Burma Railway for two-and-a-half years and later he laboured on airstrips at Saigon and Phnom Penn. After the Japanese surrender he returned to Plymouth and served in Gambia, Tamar, Sussex and Belfast. He then spent three years as MOA to General Campbell Hardy. Thornhill & District RBLS.

Herbert A Lomas. Sigs. Served at Arthur, Mercury, Prinz Albert, Comus and a member of the Comus Association. March 22. Aged 84.

John Richard Hughes. Air Mechanic (Elec. and Inst) FAA. Served 1944-47. North East Hants and District branch of the Fleet Air Arm Association. March 24.

Derek Lovesey. AB. Served in Skipjack. Algerines Association. February 28. Aged 83.

Jack Turvey. ERA. Served in Flying Fish. Algerines Association. March 7. Aged 86.

Anne Harris (née Boggie). Joined WRNS Jan 1971 at Dauntless. Basic training at Daedalus then Heron (RNAS Yeovilton) for Station Flight. First Wren Air Mechanic drafted to Osprey (RNAS Portland) 1972, then returned to Daedalus 1974 where she met her future husband, a Leading Hand who later retired as a Commander (AE). Had to leave WRNS 'upon marriage' September 1976. March 31. Aged 58.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Lt Cdr Terrance 'Terry' John Sullivan. Served 1952-71 at Dolphin and in submarines Rorqual, Trespasser and Turpin also ships Bulwark and Hedingham Castle. Southern Ontario RNA. February 23. Aged 80.

Harry Reynolds. Stoker. Served 1944-47 in Sheffield, Papua and Leander. Chairman and life member Watford & District branch. March 9. Aged 85.

The Reverend Canon Sydney 'Syd' Willcox. Took on the role of Chaplain to Bridport RNA in 2005 and was made an Honorary Shipmate that same year, this led to his appointment as the No.4 Area Chaplain in 2008. March 18. Aged 74.

George Wilfred Taylor. Served in Berwick. Beccles branch. December 11. Aged 85.

Adam Gibb. AB. Served 1942-45 in Lochinvar, Flora, Euroclydon and Pembroke. Beccles branch. March 11. Aged 87.

William 'Bill' Fitton. AB. HO rating. During WW2 he volunteered for the RN Commandos and served in Combined Operations at North Africa, Sicily, Italy, South France and Italy. Bolton branch. March 23. Aged 88.

Victor Frost. PO Motor Mechanic. Served 1943-47 training in Duke and Shrapnel. Served at Cricket, Bursledon, a landing craft repair yard on the River Hamble then Victory and Gadfly. Finally drafted to ML220 in the first ML flotilla going to Kiel for the monitoring of the reduction and dispersal of the German fleet and the Baltic to Flensburg. Hanworth branch. March 12. Aged 84.

Bruce Hutton. ME1 (Stoker). Served 1951-59 in Swiftsure, Mars, Forth, Birmingham, Cavendish, Musketeer and Charity. Margate branch. April 1.

Lawrence Michael 'Mike' Farrington. AM(O). Served 1949-57 in Gamecock (1940), Seahawk (1950-52), Vengeance (1942), Perseus (1952-53), Goldcrest (1953-54), Bulwark (1954-56), Daedalus, Heron and Nuthatch (1956-57). Chairman of the Yorkshire branch Fleet Air Arm Association, member of the Armourers Association, honorary member of the 8th Destroyer Association, life member and secretary of the York and District branch for the last 10 years. February 25. Aged 80.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

Capt C A F 'Colin' Buchanan. Submarine service 1957-82 in Taciturn (twice), Porpoise, Opportune, Tabard, Cachalot and Courageous. Dolphin branch. Aged 69.

J P 'John' Coughlan. LME. Submarine service 1948-55 in Turpin, Totem, Springer, Sportsman, Sea Devil, Aeneas, Anchorite and Scythian. Essex branch. Aged 81.

W S 'Stan' Hames. L/Tel. Submarine service 1940-46 in L26, H44, H28 and Unruffled. Welsh branch. Aged 92.

J D H 'Jim' Mulherine. CPO Cox'n. Submarine service 1963-87 in Excalibur, Alcide, Thermopylae, Artful, Opossum, Walrus, Oracle, Osiris, Onyx and Sealion. Burton branch. Aged 78.

D 'Des' Radwell. Sig. Submarine service 1942-50 in Oberon, Taurus, Sceptre, Statesman, Solent, Tabard, Templar, Sturdy and Trespasser. Dolphin branch. Aged 89.

HMS NEWFOUNDLAND ASSOCIATION

Norman A Scott RM. Served 1940-46 in Newfoundland, Glasgow, Trinidad (survivor), Edinburgh (survivor), Venerable and Highflier. January 23.

John Clive Glencross. EM1. Served 1952-61 in Newfoundland 1955-56 and submarines Turpin and Andrew. February 5.

George 'Ron' Rowley. AB. Served in Newfoundland 1942-47. January 28.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION

T Francis. Served on board LSTs 3551 and 3512, also Reggio, Empire Celtic, Amazon and Ceylon. March 9.

Harry Griffiths. Served on board LCTs 395 and 411, also LCH 187. March 24. Aged 86.

Harry Windsor. Served on board LCTs 504 and 1102, also LCH 100. March 29.

The *Navy News* website will be changing over the next few months. Please bear with us. We intend to keep providing many of our Noticeboard services online, although in a different format.

We shall provide you with greater detail in a forthcoming *Navy News*.

NOTICEBOARD

Ask Jack

HMS Kemerton's Nameboards: June 2012 will be the 50th anniversary of the 1962 commission which will be celebrated at the village from which it takes its name in Gloucestershire. The village has the ship's bell, the ensign and paying off pennant on display in the Victoria Hall plus other memorabilia but I would dearly like to know if the nameboards are out there somewhere. It would be very special if we could present these to the village on this occasion. Contact Colin Brett at pancho.brett@talktalk.net or tel: 01302 883331.

Pete Bailey: I am trying to contact some shipmates who attended my wedding at Whittington, Norfolk on August 19, 1961. They are John Setford, Jimmy Brean, Jan Love and Laurie Laurence (ex HMS Messina). I would dearly love to hear from these lads. Contact Pete Bailey at galleyrat@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01752 299091.

HMS Ark Royal: I'm looking for someone who would remember my late father POME Peter Fallon. He served on HMS Ark Royal. If anyone can remember if he was at sea September, October or November 1966 and where it would be of great help to me. Contact Kimberley Keegan on tel: 07889 506064.

Trophy lives



TROPHY **No 8,317** is a mounted head of a tiger which dates from 1921 and which was presented to the cruiser HMS Tiger in 1959 by Captain and Lady Walwyn.

Inevitably this fine specimen had become damaged with the passage of time, and has recently been fully restored to the condition shown above by The Only Taxidermist, of mid-Wales.

Forty-three years before its presentation a previous HMS Tiger – a battlecruiser – was part of Admiral Sir David Beatty's Battle Cruiser force at the Battle of Jutland.

This was the only action of World War 1 between battle fleets, rather than battle squadrons, when the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet under the command of Admiral Sir John Jellicoe engaged the German High Sea Fleet led by Vice Admiral Reinhard Scheer in the North Sea.

Both Navies were seeking maritime supremacy; in late May 1916 the Germans knew that Beatty was at sea and hoped that Vizeadmiral Franz Hipper's modern battlecruisers could lure him into the path of the High Sea Fleet.

On May 30, wireless intercepts indicated that the Germans were also at sea and Jellicoe sailed with the Grand Fleet to rendezvous with Beatty – in doing passing over a U-boat picket line which, not expecting the British to be at sea, was unprepared.

The following day a Danish ship was sighted by the escorts of both Beatty's and Hipper's forces; while investigating this vessel the escorts sighted each other and reported the presence of the enemy to their respective flagships.

The battlecruisers were in sight of each other by 1530 and fire was opened 20 minutes later, at a range of 15,000 yards.

Within 15 minutes of action opening the battlecruiser HMS Indefatigable exploded and sank; 30 minutes later HMS Queen Mary also blew up and sank.

Hipper's ships were also taking damage and he turned away from Beatty, aiming to lead Beatty towards Scheer's battleships.

At 1638 Cdre Goodenough in HMS Southampton sighted Scheer's force and, realising he would be trapped, Beatty (in HMS Lion) turned away in the hope of leading the Germans towards Jellicoe, in HMS Iron Duke.

Cdre Goodenough was almost the only British Commanding Officer who reported everything he saw to the flag; other ships assumed that if they could see the enemy then the capital ships would be able to see them as well, and opportunities to engage the enemy were thus missed.

The Grand Fleet opened fire at 1817 but within 15 minutes a third battlecruiser, HMS Invincible, had been destroyed while the enemy battlecruisers were also suffering hits.

The main action was over by 2100 but under cover of darkness Scheer and Hipper passed astern of the British and reached safety, although they had had to scuttle the battlecruiser Lützow and the battleship Pommern was torpedoed and sunk by British destroyers.

A total of 151 British and 99 German ships were involved in the battle; the Royal Navy losing 14 and the High Sea Fleet 11; while the latter had 2,551 men killed the figure for the RN was 6,094.

Four Victoria Crosses were awarded following the battle, to Cdr Bingham (HMS Nestor), Cdr Jones (HMS Shark), Major Harvey (HMS Lion) and Boy 1st Class Cornwell (HMS Chester) – the latter three all being awarded posthumously.

The argument about who won at Jutland (or the Battle of the Skagerrak, as it is called by the Germans) continues to this day – the British claiming that, although the High Sea Fleet was not eliminated, it rarely went to sea again during the war.

The German argument is that they lost fewer ships and men, and retained the capacity to continue to fight a maritime war.

Perhaps of interest, the author of this article has a letter to his maternal grandfather from his brother-in-law, who was the Torpedo Coxswain of the destroyer HMS Marne, in which he says that the feeling in the Grand Fleet that the failure to destroy the High Sea Fleet meant that the Battle of Jutland was perceived as being a German victory.

Reunions

MAY 2011

HMS Bulwark, Albion, Centaur Association: Did you serve on any of these light fleet carriers? Our association is open to anyone who served at any time on these ships. We send a magazine three times per year and run events including AGM/Social, sea trips with our current ships Albion and Bulwark and anniversary commemorations at home and abroad. Whilst our 'home port' is Pompey, this year's AGM/social will be held at Bracklesham Bay on the South Coast on May 14. We also sponsor sea cadets from our affiliated SCCs on the Training Ship 'Jack Petchey'. Membership is all of £8 per annum. Enquiries to Leigh Easton at ngsfo@tiscali.co.uk or the website at http://www.bulwarkassoc.co.uk or write to Glenmoray, Hayford Place, Cambusbarron, Stirling FK7 9JX.

Southampton University Air Squadron 70th Anniversary Reunion: This will take place on May 14 at 1A Bugle Street, Southampton from 1700 onwards. All ex-members welcome. For more information contact Helen Dobbs at helen_dobbs88@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 07990 693891.

Royal Naval Engineroom Association are holding a service at the Peace Gardens, Bath Row, Birmingham, in the presence of the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress on the Sunday of their annual weekend reunion, May 22, to dedicate their association plaque in memory of past and present engineroom personnel. More information from Bob Styants at bobstyants@btopenworld.com or tel: 0120 422 4115.

JUNE 2011

Glorious, Ardent & Acasta Association (Glarac): To commemorate the 71st anniversary of the sinking of these ships and the loss of 1,531 men, a Memorial Service is to be held at St Nicholas Church, HMS Drake, Devonport, Plymouth on June 5. For more details contact Vince Marcroft at vinny847022@hotmail.com or tel: 0161 654 7638.

Second HMS Manchester Association: The second HMS Manchester Reunion will be held in the WO SR & SNCOs Mess, HMS Nelson from June 11 to 12. For further details visit the website at http://www.2ma.org.uk/ or contact Steve Swaine at stevie27@hotmail.com, tel: 01634 684717 or Ian Tidbury at iantids@ntlworld.com, tel: 023 9225 3859.

SEPTEMBER 2011

HMS Comus: Reunion from September 9 to 11, at the Maritime Club on Friday, Saturday at HMS Nelson, Victory Club from 1900 to 2330 and on Sunday after breakfast, Church Service and fond farewells for another year. Contact Bryan Cox at bryanvcox@hotmail.com or tel: 01903 232720 for further information.

846 Squadron (1962-64) Association: Reunion at the Tiverton, Best Western Hotel on September 9 and 10. For more information contact Barry 'Baz' Marshall at bjmarshall@littlebridge.eclipse.co.uk or tel: 01288 381002.

HMS Orion Association: Reunion/AGM is to take place at the Astor Hotel. Plymouth from September 10 to 11. For further information contact Kay West at kay.west@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 0116 259 2171.

HMS Crane Association U23/F123 (1943-62): Reunion and AGM at the Gateway Hotel, Nottingham from September 30 to October 2. All ex-Cranes and friends welcome. Details from Joe Smith at crane.bird@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 0161 736 4918 or Tony Nuttall on 0115 952 6363.

OCTOBER 2011

HMS Eagle, Last Commission 1969-72: 'Friends of HMS Eagle' are holding a 'Nautical Experience' Reunion at the Queensferry Hotel, North Queensferry, with fantastic views overlooking the Firth of Forth, from October 7 to 9. After the very successful last four reunions around the country – All 'Eaglets' plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to re-enact the 'Rosyth & Edinburgh visits'. 'Meet & Greet' on the Friday evening in the 'Pentlands Suite'. On Saturday there are various Tours from the Hotel, plus a choice of visits to HMY Brittania, Edinburgh Castle, BAE Systems, Rosyth Dockyard, Dumferline Cathedral and Burnt Island where Eagle was scrapped, followed in the evening by a very nautical dinner, dance and entertainment including local Sea-Cadet Unit at Rosyth, involvement including 'Ceremonial' Sunset' and 'Up Spirits'. All commissions 1952-72 very welcome. Hotel accommodation at very good rates. For details contact main organisers Danny du Feu (ex-L/Sea (Boats)) email danny@ddf-photography.co.uk or mob: 07966 258103 or write to 57 Westover Road, Leicester, LE3 3DU or events secretary Bill Melvin (ex-LPTI), email: bill.melvin@virgin.net or mob: 07740 439987. See you there!

HMS St Brides Bay: Reunion will be held at the Best Western Hotel, Leyland, Preston on October 7 and 8. All commissions welcome to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the final pay-off. Cost is £45 pppn, which includes bed, breakfast and evening meal. Please contact Jeff and Margaret Vardy on 01773 875950 or write to 13 Meadow Grove, Newton, Alfreton DE55 5TW asap to avoid disappointment.

HMS Raleigh: A reunion is being organised for anyone who joined HMS Raleigh on October 12 or 19, 1981 in Cunningham/Drake 42 or Anson/Benbow 43. The reunion will take place in HMS Raleigh on October 20. Anyone who requires more information can contact Rob 'Mac' McLachlan at r-mclachlan@sky.com or tel: 01752 348315 or mobile: 07766 560011.

HMS Diana Association: Reunion and 19th AGM will be held from October 21 to 23 at the Inglewood Hotel, Belgrave Road, Torquay. A big support from all members would be fantastic for the new venue. Also, any ex HMS Diana matelots out there wishing to join us please contact the Secretary at johnjackie.fisher@talktalk.net or 01163678360. We have members from nearly all commissions so there is a good chance of meeting up with your old oppos.

Survey Ships Association: 17th reunion will be held from October 28 to 31 in Stafford. For information on membership and reunion contact the Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Portsmouth PO6 1BY, email: secretary@surveyships.org.uk or phone 023 9279 1258.

NOVEMBER 2011

HMS Pembroke F/Chief & CPOs Mess: Reunion takes place at the Cumberland Hotel, East Overcliffe Drive, Bournemouth BA1 3AF from November 4 to 6. £48 pppn to include D, BB, ensuite accommodation, entertainment and leisure facilities at sister hotel next door. Book direct with Miss Hana Smith on 01202 298350 and quote: Pembrokers Group. For more information contact George Creasey on 01634 715784.

HMS Albion, 1962-64 Commission: The Old Grey Ghost's 12th reunion is to be held on November 5 at the Royal Beach Hotel, Southsea. Contact Keith Ridley at hmsalbion@hotmail.com or tel: 01480 810848 for more details.

FEBRUARY 2012

Clive Morris, ex caterer will be holding his 65th birthday on February 26, 2012 in California. On this occasion he will be opening an original gallon of Navy Rum. All who knew me are welcome. For details contact Clive at cmorrisrpm@aol.com or write to 237 Siesta Avenue, Thousand Oaks, California, 91360, USA.

Talking Navy News goes digital

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number, or email patn-rec@hotmail.com. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Contact sheet

Ministry of Defence: 0870 607 4455, www.mod.uk
Royal Navy recruitment: 0845 607 5555, www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Veterans Agency: 0800 169 2277, www.veterans-uk.info
RN and RM Service records: 01283 227912, navysearchpgrc@tnt.co.uk
Royal Naval Association: 023 9272 3823, www.royal-naval-association.co.uk
Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity: 023 9254 8076, www.rnrmc.org.uk
RNBT: 023 9269 0112 (general), 023 9266 0296 (grants), www.rnbt.org.uk
British Legion: 08457 725725, www.britishlegion.org.uk
Naval Families Federation: 023 9265 4374, www.nff.org.uk
Seafarers UK: 020 7932 0000, www.seafarers-uk.org
SSAFA Forces Help: 0845 1300 975, www.ssafa.org.uk
RN Community: www.rncom.mod.uk
Medals enquiries: 0800 085 3600
Royal Naval Museum: 023 9272 7562, www.royalnavalmuseum.org
Fleet Air Arm Museum: 01935 840565, www.fleetairarm.com
Royal Marines Museum: 023 9281 9385, www.royalmmarinesmuseum.co.uk
RN Submarine Museum: 023 9252 9217, www.rnsubmus.co.uk
National Maritime Museum: 020 8312 6565, www.nmm.ac.uk
Imperial War Museum: 020 7416 5320, www.iwm.org.uk

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in June's Noticeboard must be received by May 11

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
- Entries are free to non-commercial organisations. Items pertaining to commercial work, books and publications for profit can only appear as paid-for advertising.
- The Editor reserves the right to edit or refuse publication of submitted notices.
- Space does not allow us to accept more than one free insert. Any subsequent notice will have to be paid for at advertising rates.

Operational Honours

A total of 136 members of the Armed Forces have received honours and awards in the Operational Honours List dated March 25 2011.

The Navy list, which recognises service on operations in Afghanistan and national operations for the period 1 April to 30 September 2010, is below.

AFGHANISTAN

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)
Lt Cdr Ian Graham Berry, RD Royal Naval Reserve
S/Sgt Paul George McIntosh, Royal Marines
Maj Philip Mark Totten, Royal Marines
Distinguished Service Order (DSO)
Lt Col Paul Melvyn James, Royal Marines
Conspicuous Gallantry Cross (CGC)
Mne Mark Anthony Jackson, Royal Marines
Cpl Seth Vincent Scott Stephens, Royal Marines (killed in action)
Military Cross (MC)
Capt Jack Anrude, Royal Marines
CSgt Brian Bridger, Royal Marines
Mne Lewis Lockwood, Royal Marines
Sgt Billy George Murphy, Royal Marines
George Medal (GM)
Acting LCpl Ryan Shelley, Royal Marines
Mention in Despatches (MiD)
Lt Cdr Stephen Glyn Brown, Royal Navy
Cpl Toni Galacki, Royal Marines
Capt Jonathan James Phelps, Royal Marines
WO2 Paul William Ryan, Royal Marines
Cpl Darren William George Simpson, Royal Marines
Mne Alexander Charles George Tostevin, Royal Marines
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
Lt Cdr Nicholas John Bowser, Royal Navy
Sgt Duncan Gilhooly, Royal Marines

MISCELLANEOUS AWARDS

Air Force Cross
Lt Cdr Peter Martin Higgins, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB)
PO(Diver) Simon John Spencer, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air (QCBA)
Lt Cdr Graham John Chesterman, Royal Navy

Diary dates

JUNE

June 4, Saturday: **Collingwood Open Day,** www.royal-navy.mod.uk/cwd/openday/index.htm

June 18-19, Saturday and Sunday: **Sultan Show,** www.sultan.org.uk

June 25, Saturday: **Armed Forces Day,** www.armedforcesday.org.uk: Events around the country, and main event in Edinburgh

JULY

July 1-2, Friday and Saturday: South Coast Proms, www.southcoastproms.com

July 9, Saturday: **Yeovilton Air Day,** http://www.royalnavy.mod.uk/operations-and-support/establishments/naval-bases-and-air-stations/rnas-yeovilton/rnas-yeovilton-air-day-2009/

July 20, Wednesday: **Culdrose Air Day**

Assignments

Lt Cdr N Pugh to be promoted to Acting Commander and appointed as CO of HMS Cambria from November 2.

Sports lottery

March 19: £5,000 – CPO S J Warnes; £1,500 – AB1 T L Croft; £500 – Lt M J Hogben.

March 26: £5,000 – AB1 N J Powell; £1,500 – LH R W Dawkins; £500 – Lt Cdr P Dawson.

April 2: £5,000 – Capt M Heenan; £1,500 – Lt S P Hearty; £500 – AB1 J B Gray.

April 9: £5,000 – LH P Mulligan; £1,500 – Sgt M Brown; £500 – AB1 S R Yeomans.

Temeraire Open Day

THERE'S a chance for Portsmouth folk to meet some of the city's sailors and Royal Marines and get to grip with their kit when HMS Temeraire hosts the inaugural Armed Forces and Emergency Services Open Day.

The June 1 event at the Burnaby Road establishment has grown out of an annual open day hosted in the Solent city by local law enforcement and emergency services – not least to help break down some of the barriers between young people who might have misconceptions of what the blues and twos do.

This year, the military's also been invited on board. They've gone one better than simply join in by hosting the open day at Temeraire.

All three Forces will be in attendance, as will Hampshire police, the county's fire and rescue service, British Transport Police, the Military Preparation College, British Red Cross, cadet organisations, and the RNLI among others.

They'll be rocking up with various kit – police cars, fire engines and the like, while the Air Ambulance helicopter will be touching down in the grounds.

There will also be a display arena with the aim of showcasing the work of police dogs and their military counterparts who are used to find bombs in Afghanistan and elsewhere; cadets will battle it out in a field gun contest; and crowd control experts will show how to deal with an unruly mob.

Although entry to the event, from 10am-3pm, is free, visitors can make a donation to the RNRMC.

"It really will be a fantastic awareness day where children and adults alike can meet real people who are the job on a daily basis – and see some of the equipment that they use to do it," said Lt Emma Garey, Temeraire's First Lieutenant.





MISCELLANEOUS

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Stevenage hosted by ferry firm

EIGHT Sea Cadets and four staff from **Stevenage** unit enjoyed a two-day trip from Hull to Rotterdam on board The Pride of Hull – compliments of P&O Ferries recently.

The cadets, guided by Capt Peter Holt, were shown around the bridge and were amazed by the sheer size considering it was only manned by Capt Holt and three crew.

Capt Holt explained various facts and figures about the engines and demonstrated how the radar worked and explained what was on the screen.

Following on from the tour of the bridge, Chief Engineer John Glover took the cadets on a guided tour of the engine room.

This was a real eye-opener – from the size of the pistons to the drive shafts, everything was on a huge scale.

When an alarm sounded on the control panel the cadets were astonished to find out that it was to do with a freezer fault in the galley – they had not appreciated that the engine room would know what was going on in other parts of the ship.

This was followed by a further tour of the ship by Matthew Stone, taking in visits to the galleys, restaurants and even a cell for the odd troublesome passenger...

Having reached Rotterdam the cadets could not miss out on some sightseeing, including the Maritime Museum and renovated museum ship HNLMS Buffel.

Following a thorough renovation Buffel, an ironclad ram-ship built in Glasgow in 1868, can once again be admired in her original state.

Once on the refurbished Buffel you can imagine yourself back in the time that the ship saw service as coast guard and training-ship of the Dutch Navy.

Her guns boom once again, the steam engines are turning at full speed and the 'cabin boy' is peeling potatoes in the galley.

After a fun-packed afternoon it was back on the ship for the homeward journey, enjoying the kind hospitality of P&O once again.

The highlight of the trip was being allowed to be on the bridge when coming into the port of Hull, witnessing such a huge vessel seemingly effortlessly navigating into its berth.

Lions help Buxton

BUXTON and District Lions Club have donated £500 to the **Buxton** unit – a welcome addition to the building fund which is being used to extend the unit's headquarters at Silversands.

All at TS Bulwark are grateful for the Lions' continued support, and for the turnout at a quiz night which raised £400.

The building project, costing over £40,000, will see the construction of a new boat shed, the enlargement of the main deck and improvements to the galley and toilets.

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● *Portrush unit's new Trinity 500 boats are unloaded from the delivery lorry*

Portrush welcomes Trinity 500 delivery

PORTRUSH unit has taken delivery of their new Trinity 500 rowing boats.

The eagerly-anticipated boats have been designed specifically for Sea Cadets by Olympic yachtsman Jo Richards, designer of the hugely successful Laser Pico series, and are named Trinity 500 in honour of the quincentenary of the incorporation of Trinity House, the statutory authority for aids to navigation in England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar.

The Trinity House Maritime Charity, a separately-funded arm of the Corporation of Trinity House, paid for the design and development costs.

The new rowing boats – known as pulling boats to cadets – can seat ten, but normal crews will be five cadets (four oarsmen and a coxswain), with room for an adult volunteer instructor if necessary.

They are more accessible, cost-effective and practical than the Admiralty Sailing Craft (ASC) they replace, and will have a life-span of at least 25 years, making it a lasting investment for youth.

Hamilton Shipping Ltd of Belfast generously freighted all the boats to Coleraine for free.

Hamilton Shipping is one of the largest privately-owned shipping and cargo-handling companies in Ireland, operating out of offices in Londonderry, Belfast, Dublin and Cork, with an associate office in Limerick.

Coleraine Harbour Commissioners also supported the freighting by off-loading and storing the boats till required by the cadets in mid-April.

The boat is specifically designed for young people and so will not place undue ergonomic strain on their backs and arms.

It is light, and so easily manoeuvrable by cadets as well as being more transportable – making it easier for units to engage in competition with each other.

Pulling the boat requires vigorous physical activity which it is hoped, in an increasingly sedentary culture, will help lead to healthier and happier young people.

The boat is often the first command a cadet takes on the water, from as young as 12 years old, laying the foundations of not only seamanship but invaluable leadership and teamwork skills – often going far beyond what they can be taught in school.

With their 25-year lifespan, it is estimated that each boat will be used by a minimum of 6,500 cadets and 1,300 adult volunteers – a tangible and cost-effective investment for young people today, and for future generations.

Captain Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor said of the project: "It is the most important development in the Corps for 40 years."

The unit HQ, TS Duke of York, is situated in Dunluce Avenue, Portrush, where cadets gather every Monday and Thursday evenings.

And the young (and not so young) can now see and (hopefully) join the cadets when training in their new pulling boats, and two new RigiFlex powerboats, on the River Bann.

Boat activities are based at the Coleraine Marina and car park area.



● *The Penzance drill team in action during the South West Area competition*

Penzance march on

PENZANCE unit continued to feature strongly in this year's Drill and Piping competition, taking a clutch of titles at the South West Area regional event.

Competing against teams from as far away as Birmingham and West Wales, the drill squad from TS Grenville won the titles for Best Unarmed Drill Squad and Best Dressed Unarmed Drill Squad, while LC Kevin Carpenter and AC Zoe Scrivens shared the award for Best Dressed Squad Members.

The success means Penzance will go on to represent the area at the national finals, which will take place at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall early this month.

Penzance's piping team also put in their strongest performance, winning the Best Dressed Piping Team award and finishing runners-up in the Best Piping Team category, while OC Brogan Pryor won the accolade Best Dressed Piper.

Penzance's Commanding Officer, S/Lt (SCC) Mike O'Sullivan RNR, had praise for unit staff who helped prepare the teams for the competitions, including PO Matt Bird (drill) and PO Rob James (piping).

"I am very proud of the Penzance cadets – the Drill and Piping is the premier competition for the Sea Cadets and the South West Area has always been of a very high standard.

"The hard work and dedication of the staff and cadets has certainly paid off and I would like to thank all of them."

The unit also expressed thanks to Debbi Pryor and Paul Goss, of Helston Dry Cleaners, for their help in cleaning and tailoring the uniforms – and to the parents of cadets for their support.

Ceremonial role

WHEN a 21-gun salute was fired at Hillsborough Castle to mark the anniversary of the accession of the Queen, a cadet from **Portrush** unit had a key role to play.

Cpl Stewart Phillips, of the unit's Royal Marines cadet detachment, escorted the inspecting officer Mrs Joan Christie, the Lord Lieutenant of Antrim.

Stewart has been a regular at TS Duke of York as a Royal Marine cadet for four years, representing the detachment in numerous national competitions and on several occasions leading the Portrush team as section commander.

Keira takes memorial award

LC Keira Yeoman of **Kettering** unit has been awarded the Pollock Memorial Award for 2010 by the District Officer for Northants and Leicester, Lt Cdr (SCC) Paul Perry RNR.

The David and Peter Pollock Memorial Prize was given by the relatives of Patrick Pollock, who was drowned in 1933 while sailing in the Solent.

It is awarded annually to the cadet who obtained the highest examination mark on the Leading Cadets Advancement Course at SCTC during the year.

The prize takes the form of an inscribed silver-plated boatswain's call in an engraved case, which is retained by the cadet.

LC Yeoman has also been selected to represent the UK in the international exchange to Portugal which was due to take place as *Navy News* went to press.

Whales around Scotland

ONE of the great things about being a Sea Cadet in the north of Scotland is that when you go afloat in the summer, there's a chance that you'll see a whale or dolphin at fairly close quarters – especially if you visit the Hebrides on any of the offshore fleet.

Indeed, if you don't see a porpoise in the home sailing area of **Fort William**'s TS St Christopher at least once every summer, you've been unlucky.

With that in mind, the cadets of TS St Christopher were delighted to receive an invitation to visit the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's (HWDT) yacht Silurian at her winter berth on the Caledonian Canal.

The 16m Skoochum One ketch, it turned out, had an unexpected history, having previously been a drug-running vessel.

More recently however, Silurian was used as a base during the filming of Sir David Attenborough's *Blue Planet* TV series.

However, it was her present use as a research and education vessel which was the reason for the cadets' visit.

During their visit the cadets discovered that amongst other whales, the west of Scotland is currently home to resident populations of nine killer whales and 55 bottle-nosed dolphins, and lots of porpoises – which get eaten by the killer whales...

The cadets also learned that each whale or dolphin is individually recognizable from its shape and colour pattern.

Recordings of the sounds made by the various species were also played.

Gemma Cave, Education Officer for the HWDT, said: "It's been a really new experience for us too.

"We've never had cadets on our boat before and it was really good to have a group of people who are already so committed to the sea.

"Hopefully they'll keep an eye open for whales when they go offshore and report their sightings on our website."

AC Chloe Elder said: "I never knew we had so many whales near us.

"We had a whale of a time..."

Leading Junior Cadet Catherine Watchman said: "It was really good hearing the calls of the different whales.

"They sounded really strange."

Silurian spent the winter months just above Neptune's Staircase in the Caledonian Canal at Baanvie, near Fort William.

She has now moved through the lock gates and returned to Tobermory for the start of the 2011 research season.

Iulia heads for the US

A MEMBER of **Caterham** unit will be flying the flag for her fellow cadets and the Corps in general on a transatlantic exchange trip next month.

AC Iulia Goria sent in comprehensive application forms back in December, endorsed by both the Commanding Officer at TS Zephyr, S/Lt (SCC) Aaron Clarke, RNR, and the District Officer.

And after waiting patiently for several weeks, Iulia found she had beaten off stiff competition to land a place on an international exchange trip to the United States.

S/Lt Clarke said: "This is truly an opportunity of a lifetime.

"To be able to travel abroad and represent your unit and your country is fantastic.

"This is the second exchange that Caterham have had the honour of participating in, and the Zephyr name is reaching across the globe."

LC Elliot Miles was the other Caterham globetrotter, representing the UK on a trip to Russia in 2008.









Eastbourne win Gibraltar Cup

EASTBOURNE proved they have the best Royal Marines Cadet detachment in the country by taking the 2011 Gibraltar Cup.

Teams from the various areas across the country competed in timed events at the Commando Training Centre RM, Lympstone, involving map-reading, observations, first aid, a night navigation exercise and a night spent under the stars on the first day, run at the Woodbury Common Training Area.

The competition finished with a four-mile run, an assault course, four-ton truck push and a gruelling log run on the Bottom Field.

It all took place in glorious sunny weather, which meant the endurance tests were even more testing.

The whole competition was independently judged by people who know – the Royal Marines Training Team at Lympstone.

So Eastbourne's intensive training sessions proved worthwhile as the eight-strong team took the honours.

The winning team *(pictured top left with Cdr Andy Giles, Southern Area Officer)* representing Zulu Coy (**South**), was Cdt Sgts Goward, Daniels, Holding and Upperton (all 17), Cdt Cpl Potter (17) and MC2s Lawlor and Hall (both 15) and Sear (17).

Their efforts meant the placings were divvied up between the other five, with the final result being:

2: **Bristol Filton** (Alpha Coy, **South West**)
3: **Bromley** (Lima Coy – **London**)
4: **Burton-on-Trent** (X-Ray Coy – **East**)
5: **Wallasey** (Bravo Coy – **North West**)
6: **Queensferry** (Yankee Coy – **North**).

It was the fifth time Eastbourne had competed in the competition in seven years, and with the unit having celebrated its centenary last autumn, the Gibraltar Cup win was yet more cause to celebrate.



Pictures: LA(Phot) Emz Nolan

And apart from a special 'well done' to the team members for all their hard work, determination and commando spirit, there was another factor at play.

The winning team, along with the rest of the unit, said a special thank you to the Gibraltar Cup Training Team, under the command of Capt Juniper – C/Sgt Pike, C/Sgt Moulding, Sgt Gates, Mr Holding, Mr Bridger and the Logistics Team.

NTC band leads the big parade

WHEN HMS Shoreham was granted the Freedom of the Borough in her namesake town, the parade was led by the Corps of Drums from the Royal Marines Band, Portsmouth, with the addition of the **Nautical Training Corps' West Sussex South Region Massed Band**.

For the record, that included TS Implacable from **Littlehampton**, TS Intrepid from **Lancing** and TS Sturdy from **Chichester**.

The NTC became involved through an invitation from CPO 'Arty' Shaw, of HMS Collingwood, who helps out with drill training.

He wanted a band to play musical salutes and to provide music for the parade through the town as the Royal Marines could only provide a Corps of Drums.

Members of the Sea Cadet Corps also attended the parade.

NTC Ceremonial Training Director Cdr (NTC) Brian Mitchell said that "the band looked, marched and sounded superb, and were fine representatives of the Corps."

He added that a Corps band had also taken a high-profile role in recent historic celebrations in Portsmouth, and hoped there may be further such opportunities.

Pirates and strange voices

ST ALBANS cadets and staff swapped their uniforms for striped shirts, eye patches, parrots and swashbuckling swords when they raised money for Comic Relief.

The mutiny was rounded off as the Jolly Roger was raised at the start of the evening instead of the Sea Cadet Ensign.

But the one-day-only mutiny saw youngsters, staff and supporters making contributions to turn in their uniforms for the evening, while cadets also paid to take part in a range of games with a nautical theme, and a quiz.

In finest pseudo-buccaneer dialect PO (SCC) Ted Hill, the unit Training Officer, said: "Aarrghh – it were a grand fine evenin' for raisin' the Jolly Roger, havin' a bit o' fun and raisin' a few pieces of eight for Comic Relief. Aarrghh!"

Their colleagues over at **Chippenham** unit also did their bit for Comic Relief, though in this case red noses were enough to register the unit's support for the charity initiative during the regular Friday parade night.

Quarterdeck Divisional Officer CI (SCC) Robby Allen said: "It was difficult to keep a straight face in the seamanship and junior classes as the cadets' voices were similar to those heard on any railway station platform."

During Evening Colours Boats Officer CPO (SCC) Martin Sausins told the cadets that the two worked well together, as Comic Relief and Chippenham Sea Cadets were both charities doing good work through having fun.

This year was the first year the Corps formally supported the Comic Relief programme.



● *Cadets and staff from St Albans mutiny in aid of Comic Relief*



● *Cdt Jacob Howell, of Chippenham unit*

Pride of Tigers

THE town mayor was among the VIPs who attended the **Chippenham** unit's annual awards evening – for very good reason.

Cllr Sandra Oakes spoke of her pride at being unit president, and how she was impressed by the camaraderie and dedication of cadets and staff.

As the names of the winners are kept secret until the awards are handed out, there is plenty of pride on show, and recipients appreciate how special it is to receive a prize, said TS Tiger DO Robby Allen.

AC David Smith was awarded a scholarship to help crew the sail training ship TS Royalist, an example, according to CO Lt (SCC) Barry Archer RNR, of "what makes the Sea Cadets so special – it can give you once in a lifetime experiences that you will remember for the rest of your life."

LC Lisa Evans won the Cliff Bud trophy by getting one of the highest scores recorded by a cadet for promotion to leading cadet, and being unit standard bearer, and she also walked away with the top prize – the Alastair Black trophy for the outstanding cadet.

Repeat success

FOR the second year in succession **Norwich** unit has won the East Anglia District Cup, competed for annually by the seven units in Norfolk and Suffolk.

Units are judged on their performance over the year in a number of competitions both at district, area and national levels.

Last December Norwich cadets travelled to RAF Honington to take part in the annual Drill and Piping competition, finishing best Unarmed Squad and Colour Party and runners-up in piping.

But the climax of the day for Norwich was the presentation of the District Cup, made by District Officer Lt Cdr Meadows, who made the cadets aware of how prestigious this award is.

The cup was not Norwich's only achievement in 2010.

The unit won their fourth burgee after their Royal Navy Inspection, carried out by Capt Windsor, Captain of Sea Cadets.

As part of the inspection the unit performed an Armada-style sail-past of their boats, manned by the cadets.

Following the inspection the unit was recognised nationally for its display and was judged by Capt Windsor to be the best-dressed unit in the area.

The unit will have been in existence for 100 years in 2012 when it will be holding its Centenary Celebrations.

SEA CADETS

Mayor visits Maldon

MALDON and District unit welcomed town mayor Cllr Ken Smith to their parade night.

The VIP guest handed out several awards during the evening, and watched as LCs Aimee Woodward and Nicole Harris were promoted to the rank of Petty Officer Cadet – the first time cadets at the unit have achieved that position.

Duke of Edinburgh awards were also presented to Aimee, Nicole and Jack Bell (silver), and Cameron Tarling and Jack Crosling (bronze).

Maldon's Commanding Officer CPO (SCC) Nick Temme said: "I'm particularly proud that our unit has two Petty Officer Cadets in POC Woodward and POC Harris.

"This is the first time cadets at our unit have reached this level, and this is testament to the years of hard work and commitment shown whilst rising through the cadet ranks.

"The unit works hard to promote the Duke of Edinburgh schemes with the cadets, and this recent haul of awards shows how committed our cadets are in gaining qualifications that are recognised throughout the UK.

"This is an excellent start to 2011 for Maldon and District Sea Cadets and we are thrilled that plans for our purpose-built unit have been passed and we can look forward to offering greater opportunities to local 10- to 17-year-olds in activities such as sailing, powerboating and canoeing, to name but a few."

Diana link flourishes

MEMBERS of **Stonehaven** unit welcomed a shipmate from their affiliated association to TS Carron.

S/M Tom Hay, from Turriff, is a member of the HMS Diana Association, which linked to Stonehaven last year following a unanimous vote by members.

Tom made a number of presentations, including a HMS Diana ship's badge, Diana lapel badges to all staff and cadets, and a cheque for £200 raised from the association's Blackpool reunion.

The veteran joined the Navy at the age of 15 in November 1952, and went through basic training at HMS Ganges ("a legal concentration camp where the SAS didn't have a look-in," he said).

He served six months in aircraft carrier HMS Indefatigable before joining HMS Diana in October 1954 as an ordinary seaman.

A session at gunnery school defined his subsequent career path, and he left in 1982 as a CPO.

HMS Diana was a Daring-class destroyer, launched in 1952 and commissioned two years later, taking part in the Suez campaign and the UK atomic test programme in the Pacific in the 1950s.

Hereford close in on new headquarters

HEREFORD unit is more than halfway towards a new headquarters, and the first evidence of the big changes ahead has already materialised.

The unit's management committee have raised more than £129,000 in 18 months towards the £220,000 cost of a new HQ for TS Antelope.

And at the start of February staff and cadets saw the bulldozers arrive to start the demolition of the old building.

This means that the unit faces the challenges of meeting in two different venues for their parades, and carrying all their training equipment with them each night.

Yet Hereford has still managed to notch up success at individual and unit level.

Cadets and staff were deemed good enough to claim a Burgee, putting them in the top 25 per cent of units in the country.

PPO Charlotte Robinson is through to the final selection of 12 for the Duke of Westminster Award, which recognises the achievement of the top cadet from all the cadet forces.

POC Courtney Aston achieved the top mark in the South West Area POC Advancements for 2010, and has been rewarded with a new award – the Martin Henwood Trophy – and an offshore bursary.

And LC Robin Williamson has been selected as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for Herefordshire for 2011 – the second year running a Hereford member has taken on the role.

Robin will support Lady Darnley during civic occasions during the next 12 months, taking over from POC Aston.

A bid for grant support from the Ulysses Trust was also successful, with an £850 award earmarked to enable cadets to enjoy a week's boating.

Hereford takes great pride from the fact that, although it is a small, land-locked unit miles from the nearest coast, they continue to succeed and afford cadets opportunities that would not be available to them elsewhere.

And that is one of the factors driving the unit on as they plan to raise the final £90,000 to complete the building project.



● *Cadets and staff from Dover unit are briefed on board HMS Tracker in the town's marina*



Wreath laid in Belgium

ON A recent school trip to the World War 1 trenches in Belgium, Joshua McDermott of **Rhyl** unit laid a wreath on behalf of the unit *(pictured above)*.

He said visiting the trenches brought to life the horrors of conflict and gave more meaning to their history lessons at school.

Not only did they see the trenches, but also visited the forward medical posts and some of the many war graves.

Joshua commented on how quiet and serene it was while looking around the graves, and how young the soldiers were who died.

Banbury squad win lion's share

AS District Officer Lt Cdr Peter Piercy said at RAF Halton after the District Drill & Ceremonial competition: "Well, your CO won't be struggling to make things up for your newsletter this month."

Not that the CO of **Banbury** unit is prone to making things up for the newsletter.

It's just that the unit once again won through to Area level, with their Armed Guard winning the District title for the second year, and new Guard Commander AC Nathan Britton-Coping picking up where POC Southan left off last year by winning the title of Best Guard Commander.

The juniors joined in by winning Best Junior Drill Squad title, with Junior Cadet First Class William Traves being named Best Junior Drill Commander at the ripe old age of 11.

The future looks bright at Banbury, with the juniors waiting in the wings to continue the unit's success in Drill.

On top of this – and no lesser achievement – the Junior Piping Team also won, progressing to the Area competition, being held as *Navy News* went to press.

With **Oxford** unit winning the Senior Piping competition, Oxfordshire was firmly back on the map as the Oxon-based units left their Buckinghamshire-based colleagues trailing in their wake.

Big thanks are also due to the staff who put in plenty of hard work behind the scene – CPO Rogers and APO Shepherd – and the families of staff and cadets who put up with the extra practice.

And thanks for the support of the TA, namely the PSAO in charge of Banbury TA Centre, Capt Kevin Taylor, who made the centre available at weekends for extra training, and to caretaker Mark Taggart who endured his weekend afternoon nap interrupted by drilling and piping...

Channel cruise for Dover

PATROL boat HMS Tracker recently spent time alongside in its affiliated town of Dover on the Channel coast of Kent.

During her annual spring deployment, the ship's Commanding Officer, Lt Conor O'Neill, brought the Archer-class vessel – the smallest warships in the Fleet – to a berth in the Marina, flying the town's flag, which had previously been presented to the ship to mark her affiliation.

Tracker then set out into the Channel with a group of cadets from **Dover** unit, to give them a taste of life at sea.

She also embarked Royal Naval Reserve trainees who had previously been taken on a tour of the maritime sights of Dover by Horace Hoyler, a renowned Dover tour guide and long-standing friend of Tracker and the Navy.

Later on Sunday evening, the ship's company and students from Oxford University Royal Naval Unit (URNU) hosted a reception for members of the local maritime and civic community in the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club, with the Naval Regional Commander, Cdre Tim Hennessey, in attendance.

Final visit to the Ark

THE undoubted highlight of another busy month for cadets from **Northampton and Wellingborough** unit, and the **Rushden Diamond** Division, was a final visit to HMS Ark Royal in Portsmouth.

The group of 23 and supporting adults was given a thorough tour of the former Fleet Flagship, from the bridge to the lower decks, to experience life on board an aircraft carrier.

The visit was something of a reward for the cadets' efforts, including getting the unit HQ at TS Laforey shipshape in time for the annual efficiency review.

This year the unit was visited by Maj Stuart Taylor RM, who also presented the unit's new Royal Marines Cadet Detachment with their letter of recognition.

The inspection ended with POC Lara Jolley being presented with the Mayor's Cadet Award, given annually to the top Sea Cadet in Northampton.



● *Cadets from Southwark unit enjoy views of Tower Bridge, close to their TS Cossack headquarters*

Chief lends a hand



● *CPO Eon Matthews (right) presents a TS Endurance plaque to the Commanding Officer of the Falklands unit – CPO Matthews had it made in the UK as there is no facility to produce such badges in the islands*

CADETS and staff of the **Falkland Islands** unit had some extra piping practice when CPO Eon Matthews, of **Newhaven and Seaford** unit, paid a visit along with members, relatives and families of HMS Glamorgan Association who flew down to the South Atlantic to unveil a memorial to shipmates who died 29 years ago.

CPO Matthews had been in contact to ask them if there was anything that they needed help with practising.

And after the piping practice CPO Matthews presented the Falkland Islands unit with a plaque from the Glamorgan Association, one from TS Defiance, and one that had been made for TS Endurance, as a ship's badge is not an easy thing to get made on the islands.

The cadets are going to continue with their practising, and contact Newhaven and Seaford via email so they can be assessed for their badges.

Meeting with the Mayor

AN invitation to join the Mayor of London and other dignitaries for tea and cucumber sandwiches was quickly taken up by cadets from **Southwark** unit.

The cadets were invited to City Hall, home to the Greater London Authority, on the South Bank of the Thames, where they met Mayor Boris Johnson and other VIPs, taking the time to explain the role and merits of the Sea Cadet movement.

On the way back to their headquarters at TS Cossack, close to City Hall, there were frequent stops by the cadets for photo calls using Tower Bridge as a backdrop.

PO (SCC) George Whitfield said: "It was a pleasure for all involved to meet Boris Johnson and other guests, and such an occasion provides the perfect opportunity for me to explain to influential people the benefits of membership of the Corps."

PO Whitfield added that "our cadets impressed all on the day with their standard of dress and interaction."

The Maltese fulcrum

DOUGLAS Austin, born in 1934 in Malta where his father was serving in the Royal Navy, has made a special study of the island and its strategic significance before and during World War 2.

He wrote a PhD on the subject at University College London which was published in 2004 as *Malta and British Strategic Policy 1925-1943*. In 2006 he followed this with *Churchill and Malta: A Special Relationship*.

Now he has written a third variation on the theme, **Churchill and Malta's War 1939-1943** (Amberley, £25 ISBN 978-1445600581). This analyses the Malta story from the perspective of the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, *writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford*.

The relevant National Archives papers have been very comprehensively trawled and combined with other sources to produce a very thorough, professional and well written analysis that is very successful in demonstrating the great preoccupation Malta was for Churchill and those others responsible for the higher direction of the war.

Dr Austin is in no doubt that Malta with its air, submarine and, sometimes, surface forces, played a key role in interdicting the supply line of the Axis forces in North Africa.

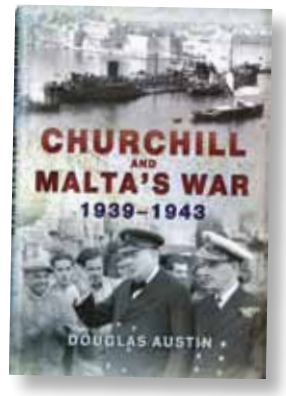
For example he attributes the defeat of Rommel's final offensive at Alam Halfa to shortages of fuel caused by the reduction of petroleum supplies to North Africa by two fifths thanks to the activities of the Malta-based striking forces themselves.

Axis fuel shortages there certainly were at the front in Egypt and Churchill, with access to decrypts of their high level messages, knew all about them. It was natural, therefore, that those at the time and since have put two and two together and interpreted the result as a sign of Malta's significance.

The Grove Review

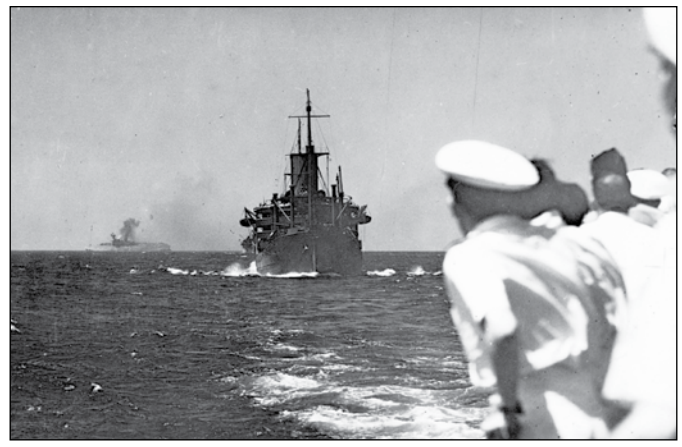
Is this actually the case, however? The highly distinguished Israeli historian Martin van Creveld in his important study *Supplying War* published in 1977 cast serious doubt on the utility of Malta as a base for effective interdiction of Axis cross-Mediterranean supplies.

Only when the surface forces of Force K were operating from Malta in late 1941 – as the pressure of Axis air attack was temporarily lifted – did the island act as such. As Austin correctly points out, the Axis loss rate jumped in November 1941 to 70 per cent of supplies embarked compared to 20 per cent the previous month.



Rommel was reduced to less than half the supplies he needed even to maintain his German and Italian forces. When told this would not change in December he withdrew from Cyrenaica under pressure from the Crusader offensive. This retreat was indeed, as Dr Austin says, "due in large measure to the loss of supplies caused by Malta's air and naval forces," chiefly, in fact the latter.

Otherwise, according to van Creveld, the main Axis problem was shortage of trucks. There were never enough to transport everything *Panzerarmee Afrika* (as it eventually became), needed from Tripoli eastwards to the front. Indeed the more Rommel advanced into Egypt the worse his logistical problems were.



● *Sailors on HMS Kenya watch the death throes of HMS Eagle in the distance after the carrier was torpedoed during the famous Pedestal convoy to Malta in August 1942*
Picture: C Beavan

He may have put these down to supplies being sunk at sea, and informed Churchill of this through the Ultra decrypts, but that might well not have been the real reason for the problems. Intelligence, however good, can sometimes be misleading as it only gives the views of those actually overheard. Losses at sea were a good alibi for Axis logistical bottlenecks on land.

Rommel, who was probably kept in the dark by the Italians about the real problems, seems genuinely to have thought that Malta-based striking forces were the reason for his difficulties but it still seems likely they were not. Both he and Churchill were misled. Apart from that key period at the end of 1941 there were, apparently, always more supplies at Tripoli than could be moved forward.

Van Creveld's work does not appear in Dr Austin's bibliography, but Correlli Barnett's *Engage the Enemy More Closely* does, and the latter based his analysis of Malta and its situation as 'the Verdun of the naval war' around the van Creveld thesis.

Dr Austin, like many supporters of Malta's significance, chooses not to engage with this critique, which is a pity. Malta may have been as important as traditional British historiography says but we need an in depth analysis of Axis North African logistics using German and Italian sources to be sure. I am still of the van Creveld persuasion but am open to contradiction if sufficient evidence is presented. A book based on British sources, even those including intelligence material, cannot really do this.

The essence of Barnett's thesis was that by 1942 Malta had become an objective in itself, to be defended at all costs. After the loss of Singapore the Churchill Government could not sustain the loss of another Imperial 'fortress'.

This is clear from the evidence Dr Austin skilfully and knowledgeably deploys. What is so interesting is how long the preoccupation with Malta's security lasted, long after the Pedestal convoy in August 1942 and even the opening of the two-pronged North African offensive in October- November 1942.

The First Sea Lord ordered the C-in-C Mediterranean, Admiral Sir Henry Harwood, to put Malta'a security above attacks on enemy sea communications at a time when the Germans were buiding up their forces in Tunisia. Other decisions clearly demonstrated the diversion that maintaining the security of Malta was from making progress in North Africa.

As late as November 1942 Malta's survival was dependant on the arrival of the 'Stoneage' convoy from Alexandria, the successful passage of which, despite serious damage to the cruiser Arethusa, was a major achievement of the much-maligned Admiral Harwood.

In fact, the Eighth Army's advance on land had safeguarded Malta's lines of communication rather than vice versa.

Another crucial convoy, Portcullis, was sent from Alexandria in December, a significant operation which is often ignored. Just before Portcullis Harwood had reconstituted Force K at Malta, although the effects on Axis supply lines to Tunisia appear to have been rather disappointing at least initially.

The Malta-based forces were, however, able to do rather better against the evacuation of Tunisia; Austin claims that almost half Axis tonnage was sunk by forces based on the island.

Whatever the true strategic impact of Malta, *Churchill and Malta's War 1939-1943* is a truly excellent study of how the island figured in British perceptions of the conduct of World War 2. The fully referenced text is complemented by 30 well-chosen photographs and three useful maps; in all, not at all bad value at £25.

The thrill of the Hunt

THE Submarine Service owes a huge debt of gratitude to the author Peter Dorman and his support team in Australia for producing **Diving Stations: The Story of Captain George Hunt and the Ultor** (Pen and Sword, £19.99 ISBN 978-1848843219).

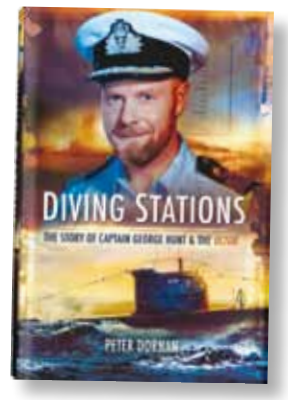
It is surely the last great story of submarine operations in World War 2, and in many respects the best has been saved until the last, *writes Cdr Jeff Tall, former director of the RN Submarine Museum*.

The book starts with George Hunt's formative years, and it is obvious from his early travels that adventure was in his genes. After prep school he chose a seagoing career and entered the naval college HMS Conway where he trained as a midshipman in the Royal Naval Reserve.

During the period he served variously with the Royal Navy in two cruisers and merchant shipping companies such as the Blue Funnel Line as a junior officer. His worldwide service shines a light on the extent of the trade that Britain enjoyed with her colonies in a bygone era.

With the storm clouds of war gathering, Hunt was one of 150 RNR officers who were selected for transfer to the Royal Navy, and he immediately volunteered for service in submarines. So what qualities were required to be a submarine officer in WW2?

That question is answered by Captain W R Fell, a veteran of Great War submarine operations, a 'Teacher-Captain', and mentor of charioteers (human torpedomen) and X-craft (miniature submarines) during the war. In his book *The Sea Our Shield*, he stated: "Scores of people ask, 'Why did men join submarines and how could they stick in them?' There are many answers to that question. For adventure and fun at the outset; then because of the intense interest, and because of the variety of tasks that must be at one's fingertips. The submariner must be a navigator, an electrician, a torpedoman, a gunnery type, and even a bit of a plumber. He must know men and get on with them; he must use initiative and tact and learn to enjoy hard living. He must accept responsibility when young, and not misuse it. There is every reason why he should join and delight in joining submarines, but the greatest joy of all is the companionship, unity and feeling that he is one of a team." As George Hunt's inspiring story unfolds you realise that this description fitted him like a glove.



I doubt though that George would have described one of his earliest experiences as 'fun'. While serving in HMS Unity in the North Sea his submarine was rammed and sunk by a well-intentioned merchant ship, and he found himself being sucked down by the sinking hull to almost 100 feet before he was able to make the long lung-bursting journey to the surface. He escaped his predicament by keeping a cool head and calling on his reserves of stamina. It was the first of many submarine adventures.

Given no time to reflect on his narrow escape, George was almost immediately given the job of liaison officer with the Dutch submarine O10, which had escaped from Holland to Gosport after Hitler's invasion of the Low Countries. In this submarine, which was tasked to provide early warning of any approaching enemy warships, he was to witness the evacuation of Dunkirk. George's list of adventures was growing.

After only 18 months or so in submarines George was then appointed first lieutenant of the WW1-vintage submarine HMS H31; submariners were indeed given enormous responsibility when young. This appointment only lasted a few months before he was on the move again – this time to act as liaison officer for the Polish submarine Sokół (formally HMS Urchin) during its build and work-up. He remained with the Poles for five months, and the importance of this appointment is reflected by the fact that both Admiral Sir Max Horton (Flag Officer Submarines) and General Sikorski (the senior Polish officer in Britain) attended the launching ceremony.

Now proficient in Polish axe-dancing, George joined HMS Proteus as first lieutenant under the command of Lt Cdr Philip Francis (who, for interest, was uncle by marriage to the late Rear Admiral Sam Salt).

Proteus operated in the maelstrom of submarine operations in the Mediterranean against the *Afrika Korps* supply lines, a campaign that would ultimately inflict a 50 per cent casualty rate on British submarines.

Proteus' Jolly Roger (her battle ensign) bears a highly unusual insignia – a can opener. This depicts the incident when the submarine, having misidentified a U-boat for a destroyer, found herself in a position on the surface when the only way to extricate herself from certain destruction was to ram her opponent, the Italian Sagitarrio. She carved her way through the destroyer's hull with her port hydroplane, and left it in the destroyer's engine room. Both protagonists retired hurt to fight another day.

Lt Hunt, now 26, returned to the UK in April 1942 to undertake his Submarine Commanding Officers Qualifying Course. His success was rewarded with command of HMS H50, in which he served his command 'apprenticeship', conducting a mixture of tasking including operational patrols in the North Sea and the Bay of Biscay, as well as the essential task of 'clockwork mouse running' to train allied anti-submarine warfare assets. Having cut his command teeth, George was then appointed to HMS Ultor.

Diving Stations describes in exhilarating detail the events and actions of George's 17 patrols in command which ranged all over the Mediterranean and encompassed a variety of operations. In addition to anti-ship patrols, Ultor conducted shore bombardments, landed special forces, carried human torpedoes, hunted for mines off landing beaches, and acted as a navigation beacon for amphibious forces.

As the Allies established a stranglehold on the Mediterranean, targets became fewer and more difficult to find, but with terrier-like determination George relentlessly pursued every opportunity presented to him.

He had fine-tuned his attacking skills to a peak of perfection, and had total confidence in his own abilities as well, of course, of those of his ships company. The ultimate expression of these skills was the successful attack against a tanker defended by no fewer than nine surface vessels and five aircraft, a feat that earned Ultor the highest praise from the Admiralty Board.

In the process of confronting the enemy, Ultor was regularly bombarded with depth charges and George was wounded by a piece of flying shrapnel – it was no picnic.

Diving Stations also covers George's later career in both submarines and general service which saw him serve in two aircraft carriers as first lieutenant and commander, command the submarines HMS Taku and Ambush, and the frigate HMS Bigbury Bay from which he flew his flag as Senior Officer West Indies in the rank of commodore. These further adventures saw him rubbing shoulders with the great and the good in many parts of the world.

Soon after the war for three years he was 'Teacher-Captain of the Perisher', reinvesting into the next generation of the submarine service his skills and daring as a submarine Commanding Officer. The legacy of a man who conducted some of the most outstanding patrols of the war, and whose "brilliance is unsurpassed in the annals of the Mediterranean Submarine Flotillas" lives on.



Sailing (again)

IT'S 35 years since it was filmed and nearly as long since it aired on TV, but **Sailor** (*Simply Media*, £30) enjoys near mythical status in the RN.

It's not the first television documentary about the Senior Service. It certainly wasn't the last. But it's a snapshot of a great ship (Ark Royal IV) on a great deployment (USA) and a last look at traditional fixed-wing flying (Phantoms, Buccaneers) from an aircraft carrier.

For today's generation of matelots it's a glimpse into a world which has changed (catapults and traps, supersonic jets, big flares and sideburns, smoking in mess decks, no computers, mobile phones and the like, no women at sea and a lot of very plummy accents among the officers, being paid in cash, officers perusing porno mags in the ward room (*Gasp – Ed*), stokers grumbling that the WAFUs grab all the glory) and a world which hasn't (take-no-prisoner senior rates, living in a confined environment, lots of uckers, chintz chairs, Jack enjoying a run ashore – although Diamond Lil's, a strip joint-cum-drag show-cum-revue bar, has long since vanished).

All ten episodes of the 1976 documentary are included in this DVD box set, plus the follow-up, the less remembered *Eight Years On*, which looks at the fate of some of the ship's company – and the ship herself which was all-but broken up.

What's also noticeable is the lack of commentator – no narrator butting in all the time. *Sailor* doesn't treat the viewer as an idiot and spoon-feed them information. It allows the footage, the clipped radio commentary between pilots and ship, and the men themselves tell the story – most refreshing in today's goldfish bowl media world.

This isn't quite the same version people watched on the telly – some of the original music has gone, notably Rod Stewart's iconic theme tune but they did leave in some Cat Stevens (sadly).

■ We have two copies of *Sailor* to give away courtesy of Simply Media.

To win tell us the name of the ship's indefatigable sponsor.

Send your entry to Sailor Competition at the address on page 26 or by e-mail to sailor@navynews.co.uk. Entries must be received by mid-day on Monday June 13 2011.

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SPORT



BRNC are top dogs

THE alma maters of the Naval and Army officer corps did battle at the annual intercollegiate games, with the RN triumphing on home turf.

Britannia Royal Naval College in Dartmouth hosted its Army counterparts from RMA Sandhurst for a day of sporting activity from fencing to rugby, clay pigeon shooting and cross-country.

Around the sports pitches supporters gathered to watch fiercely contested matches in rugby, football and hockey.

Sandhurst were still smarting from their defeat on the rugby pitch last year and from the first whistle the two sides were ready to give their all. Early points were notched up by BRNC who were still ahead at half time.

The determination of RMAS drew them level in the second half when the battle against tired legs was evident for both teams. The deciding try and conversion took place with less than ten minutes ultimately ensuring a final victory at 18-11 to the Army.

On the hockey pitch BRNC swiftly established their dominance, chalking up an 8-3 win.

Not so on the football pitch. Despite initially dominating the play Britannia were unable to put the ball in the net and were eventually foundering at 4-0 down.

Before the soldiers could count their chickens, the sailors fought back and equalised with five minutes to spare.

After five penalties apiece were unable to separate the two military academies, the contest moved into a sudden-death shoot out. That was not settled until, after three more spot-kicks each, the Dartmouth keeper saved for a memorable RN triumph.

A ramp relay race (*pictured above by S/Lt Leon Wai, Singapore Navy*) is traditional when the competition takes place at BRNC and with a mixed team of six, a fierce competition ensued. Honours went to the Army on this occasion but the BRNC runners were very close behind.

For the cross-country course, runners faced a variety of ascents and descents along a multi-terrain track, including the renowned 'cardiac hill' up the front hill to the college building.

Despite the Britannia male team maintaining a tight grip on the race in the final lap the experienced and well-drilled Sandhurst team clawed back the top positions across the finish line. The women's Army team achieved a convincing victory too over a slightly shorter course.

Assembled on the quarterdeck the fencing bouts were closely fought. In the épée RMAS had much more experience and gave an early lead to the Army.

The sabre teams were more evenly matched and BRNC won, taking a one-hit lead into the foil.

Two of the Dartmouth team had only taken up the sport in the new year and with very creditable performances all round, BRNC secured an overall win.

A 'Superstars' event drew the whole competition to a close. As most team members had already competed, the morale was high and adrenalin was pumping giving a focussed determination to secure an overall victory.

Tyre flips, box jumps, log lifts, sprints and stretcher runs were all on the menu along with 'suicides' and a 'Fred drag' (hauling the heavy sandbag dummy used in leadership exercises around the college).

Team BRNC claimed first place both in 'Superstars' and in the overall competition.

This victory over Sandhurst means that Britannia is the dominant force among the initial officer training establishments; RAF Cranwell were put to the sword back in December.



● *Proof that cheats never triumph at sport... A spot of grrrl power, courtesy of the members of HMS Albion's 2EZ4 & 2CA6 – Team Pot Mess – blatantly cheating in the flight deck tug of war contest aboard the flagship off Gibraltar (every other team only had eight members). Despite this bolstered team – from the front AB 'Dave' McLatchie, AB Rachael Miller, NA Katie Village, AB 'Smudge'Smith, ET Zoe Wareing, SA Hayley Hayes, AB Cat Forrest, MA 'Mar' Buckle, Std Demi Stuart, Wtr Lorissa Seville, SA Emma McClure, WTR Tina Tupman – they still lost.*

Picture: LA(Phot) Luron Wright, HMS Albion



● *Page turner... HMS Dragon's PO Matt Page on his way to second place in the season opener at Brands Hatch*

Pictures: PO Dutchy Holland, www.dhollandphotography.co.uk

Power of Navy Brands

BRANDS Hatch's 1.2-mile Indy Circuit hosted the first rounds of the North Gloucester Road Racing Championship.

The Navy/Royal Marines were out in force – PO Matt Page (HMS Dragon), LAET Colin Wilson (Yeovilton), and Sgt Bill Callister (RM).

Brands Hatch represented the start of what should be, if everything goes to plan, Matt's first full year of road racing, and what a start it was.

Last year had seen Matt enter his first events (at Anglesey in August) and even win a round at Oulton Park, Cheshire, in heavy rain in October, while Colin's 2010 season saw him crashing at almost every round including a massive highside at Snetterton, which laid him up for three months.

The 2011 season opened for both with the Euro Actions Mini Twins Round One Qualifier.

Matt had a good grid position, 4th, perfect really as it put him on the inside for the first turn, Paddock Hill Bend, arguably one of the most challenging turns in the UK.

His main rival on the grid was Ben Marsden who was two rows behind.

Despite a good start that put Matt through the first few turns first Marsden managed to squeeze past before the end of the first lap. As this was just a qualifying race that wasn't a problem, and he qualified in second place for the final that afternoon.

Colin had a much harder job, starting from 23rd on the grid. He fought his way through seven places to qualify on the 5th row.

Grid positions for the start of the final saw Matt with Marsden to his left in first, and, something he hadn't reckoned with: Chris Harrison, a blisteringly-fast rider on a GP45 (converted SuperMoto) on his right in third.

He and Matt swapped positions five or six times during the race (not to mention swapping paint at the same time on one occasion).

The senior rate was desperate to stay in touch so he could take advantage of any mistake and grab pole.

In the end Harrison managed to get better drive out of the last corner on the final lap and cross the finish in front of Matt – not that it really mattered, as he was in another class so Matt came away with second in the 2011 opening MiniTwin race, very respectable and hard-earned.

Colin finished in 21st with a fastest lap of 1m 1s after a full-on battle to hold off four other SV650 riders who had been snapping at his heels all race.

The format for the second day's racing was the same: qualifying in the morning and a final in the afternoon.

Once again Matt got a good start and got through the first corners in joint second with Marsden and, importantly, held the inside line.

Harrison was again right on Matt's back wheel though and the effort of fending him off caused Matt to let Ben slip through in to second.

At half distance, Matt was between Marsden and Harrison. Matt and the latter then played a game of 'lets see who can brake the latest in to Paddock'.

Matt won the game but unfortunately ran off the circuit in to the gravel trap.

By the time he'd coasted through and rejoined the track Harrison was long gone and instead Matt had Gerrard Spear to fend off – and he was in the same class.

Despite Matt using a very effective block pass into Druids, Spear got past and pushed the RN rider back to fifth. But on the final lap though Matt found a hole to dive through on the inside of his opponent at Surtees – it was a good clean but fast pass which took him off line for the next and last turn.

The senior rating was still in the lead at the last turn, but Spear got the power on more quickly and pipped Matt to fourth (third in class) by one bike length.

Colin was battling all race long with an old adversary – Dave Matchett on his ER6F. They changed positions a few times until he eventually passed the leading hand on the last lap.

Colin nevertheless achieved his weekend's goal of doing a lap around Brands Hatch in under a minute (58s to be precise).

And what of green beret Bill Callister's performance?

Well, Bill was taking part in the Formula 600 race, starting from an impressive fifth place on the grid.

Unfortunately, he fluffed his start big time, nearly stalling the bike on the line. By the first corner he had dropped to 12th. Not happy!

This only motivated him. He got his head down and started to chase, picking riders off one-by-one and, with a daring overtake at Paddock Hill bend on the last lap, he had worked himself up to eight.

By the time of the day's second race, the sun was low in the sky which made racing a little tricky.

Bill qualified 15th on the grid and made a good start, but like all North Gloucester races, the first few laps were frantic to say the least.

Thanks to top tips from colleagues, the Royal was now going faster down the straights – but he was also hitting the rev limiter, which was forcing the engine to cut.

At first Bill thought he had broken the bike and it took him three or four laps to realise what was going on: eventually he noticed a great big white light flashing at him begging him to change gear.

From that point he got his head down and started making some good lap times, finally crossing the line in 24th place (out of 35 riders).

So, by the end of the weekend Royal Navy Racing had racked up a second and a fourth place, leaving the Service third in the championship with 33 points.



Elise in wonderland

FOR those who prefer four wheels rather than two, Lt Keith Attwood (815 NAS) represented the RNRM Motorsport Association in the Toyo Tires WSCC Speed Championship at the Castle Combe circuit near Chippenham, Wiltshire.

The race comprises a practice session and two timed runs – in Lt Attwood's case in a two-litre Lotus Elise – around the 3.2 mile circuit, the longest sprint course in the country.

Competitors are released from the pit lane separately and race round the circuit against the clock.

The officer went out during the morning for his practice session – limited to two and three quarter laps – followed by timed runs in the afternoon.

Castle Combe has a reputation for being one of the fastest circuits in the UK (and also accounts for a quarter of all accidents in the country, so Lt Attwood took it easy in practice to gauge grip levels).

The timing system failed near the end of the flier's run but based on his 2010 result (159.4s), he had some work to do; the best time for 2011 was 140.1s.

As the first-time runs got under way Lt Attwood set off well from the line and had a smooth ride around the circuit and reaching 140mph on the main straight.

At the end of the run he had achieved a time of 145.8s – a considerable improvement on the previous year but still giving away seven seconds to the best in class.

His second run looked fast but was in fact half a second slower due to a bad line through one of the corners.

By the end of the day his times were good enough for seventh in his class (out of 16). As he was some 225bhp down on the winning car this was almost as good a result as he could have expected and a huge improvement of more than 14 seconds on his previous best lap at Castle Combe.

Some you win...

ON A brisk London night at the Dulwich Hamlet Stadium, the RN seniors hoped to make good two previous defeats to the Prison Service and Sussex FA with victory over London FA in the Southern Counties Cup.

The team had been prepared for the fixture at the Bisham Abbey National Sports Centre, where they had positioned themselves for a three-day training camp.

Although, this game was nominally an RN home tie, it was played in London.

The RN came out of the changing room with a predictable sense of purpose. LPT Steve Young (JSU Northwood) found himself one-on-one with the London keeper, who parried – and also clipped Young's legs. A strong shout for an RN penalty was waved away by the referee.

Fifteen minutes into the game and after a period of absolute domination by the RN, Mne Mark Connett's inswinging corner dropped at the feet of Mne Scott Sampson who duly despatched the ball to put the RN ahead.

At half time, the manager Capt Steve Marr made two changes: C/Sgt Richie Hope (CTCRM) came on for Connett and LAET Jamie Thirkle (Culdrose) came on for POPT Richie Way.

With the first Inter-Services game against the Army only a week away, it was important to give all the squad as many footballing opportunities as possible.

Eight minutes into the second period, a gorgeous inswinging cross by Young found AB Cashman who headed home.

Three minutes later, a delightful movement between Hope, Young and Mne Husbands was slotted in by the latter to put the RN 3-0 up.

Despite running out of substitutes and going down to ten men with 20 minutes to go, the Navy continued to dominate the football match: Husbands had four more opportunities to score (but sadly didn't take them).

Having defeated London FA rather convincingly in the Southern Counties Cup the previous week, the RN Senior football team approached the annual fixture against the Army in confident mood.

Despite a spirited performance at Victory Stadium, lots of possession and numerous chances, the Army held on to a 35th-minute lead to take victory in this year's fixture.

The **RN Ladies** travelled to Cosford to take on their RAF counterparts in the Inter-Services opener.

Winning every first ball, the RN dominated initial possession and the first shot came after three minutes with the skipper, AB(WS) Kayleigh Schumann-Edwards, blasting a shot over the crossbar.

The RAF weren't given time to settle, while the Navy developed their passing game, not dissimilar to past Brazilian teams, with each player confident and comfortable on the ball.

The RAF were still dangerous on the break and they had a chance on 15 minutes when they put through one of their strikers who dragged a weak shot wide.

The RAF were trying to get the ball to their pacey left midfield player at every opportunity, but CH Helen Kingscott at right back clearly had the beating of her and kept her out of the game.

After a rousing team talk at half time the RN started the second half much as they did the first. The RAF must have had the hairdryer treatment during the break as it didn't take them long to get into the game; for the first time in the match the Navy were under the cosh. The defence stood strong and kept the RAF at bay, however.

After 15 minutes, LMA Lyndsay 'Dougal' Phillips came on for AB(WS) Holly Cole to freshen up the RN attacking options.

Five minutes later Phillips broke down the right hand side and put in a cross that the RAF failed to clear effectively.

The ball eventually dropped to AB(WS) Schumann-Edwards who shot wide. The look on her face said it all!

The game was beginning to open up now and on 75 minutes disaster struck when RN keeper LET(WE) Kelly Riddell, bought down an RAF player in the area and a penalty was awarded – resulting in a rather harsh red card as the ref deemed it a goal- scoring opportunity. Kingscott put on the keeper's jersey, however she was unable to keep out the penalty.

The sailors could have let their heads go down at this point but showing true grit and determination they continued to play their game and attacked at every opportunity.

The RAF were growing increasingly nervous the more the RN pushed forward.

In the 83rd minute the RN were awarded a free kick about 25 yards out on the left hand side. The Navy loaded the box with players but AB Jenni Dick only had one thing on her mind. After checking with the referee that it was a direct free kick, she informed him of her intention to score and did just that courtesy of a looping free kick which caught the keeper unaware and dropped over her head and into the back of the net at the far post.

The remainder of the game was tight with both sides enjoying chances to win. Nerves were beginning to show, though more on the bench than on the pitch

The game ended 1-1 – an excellent performance from the RN who were the better team throughout.

After that draw, it was back to Portsmouth to host the Army for the concluding Inter-Service fixture.

The squad was boosted by the return of both LStd Lou Lee and Lt Laura Thombs, but three of the team from the RAF match were missing due to unavailability, injury and ineligibility.

Despite the RN starting brightly, the Army struck in the 35th minute.

The manager made changes at half time bringing on Lt Thombs which paid off quickly with her passing sweetly to LMA Phillips who used her pace to beat the Army defence to volley home and even the scores.

The goal livened the game up but in the 73rd minute the RN lost possession deep in the Army half enabling them to counter attack quickly and snatch what turned out to be the winning goal.

Despite losing 2-1 this was a spirited performance that promises much for the future. Special mention must go to the skipper captain, AB(WS) Schumann-Edwards who made her last appearance in RN colours before leaving the Service. She has always given 100 per cent and will be missed.



● *LPT Steve Young wrestles for the ball during the RN's 1-0 defeat to the Army*
Picture: LA(Phot) Simmo Simpson, FRPU East

Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

Away from the representative level, the first semi-final of this year's **Navy Cup**, sponsored by Ivor Dewdney Pasties, saw Ark Royal secure their passage to the final with a 2-1 win over HMNB Portsmouth.

In doing so, the carrier becomes the first ship to reach a final since HMY Britannia lost to HMS Heron in the 1979 final.

Ark Royal last won the Navy Cup in 1939 when they beat RN Barracks Portsmouth 2-1 at the old Pitt Street Stadium.

Ark's opponents in the May 5 decider will be HMS Seahawk at Fratton Park, kick off is at 4.30pm. It's the first time Pompey have hosted the contest since 1957 when RM Portsmouth beat RM Chatham 4-2 (after extra time).

At ship level, **HMS Richmond** kicked off her football campaign against the French Foreign Legion in Djibouti.

With an early start in order to beat the heat, the 15-strong squad from the Type 23 stepped out on more of a dirt track than pitch which threw up lots of dust – and awkward bounces.

Some patches of neat, well-worked link-up play were evident throughout the first half from both teams, and it must be said if the Foreign Legion team were on form with their finishing Richmond would have been in trouble at half time. As it was, the Brits were only 1-0 down at the break.

Player-manager PO(AWT) Digger Barnes made some changes at half time and brought on a few pairs of fresh legs – it seemed to pay off at first as even though the home side went 2-0 up early in the second period, it wasn't long before Richmond showed some great one-touch football, finishing the movement off with a fine goal scored by debutant SC 'Crash' Evans.

Unfortunately that was the first and last time the 23 found the net in this match – their opponents however went on to bag another couple which has to be said were not thoroughly deserved; one of the two being a dubious penalty kick. Final score to the Legion, 4-1.

Meanwhile in Gibraltar... In 30 knots of wind **Albion** met **Sutherland** in the first match of the Cougar 11 deployment.

In a classic game of 'two halves' Albion (crew 350+) set their stall out, deservedly going in 3-1 to the good at half time.

The Fighting Clan's manager Lt Cdr Paul O'Shaughnessy delivered a hair dryer of a team talk of which Sir Alex Ferguson would have been proud.

Straight from the restart, Sutherland (crew 200) went for the Fleet flagship managing to first level the scores – and add a couple more for an impressive 5-3 win.

Developing promise

THE 2011 Inter-Services **Netball** Championships were held at Aldershot Garrison Sports Centre with development and open teams from all three Forces competing.

A development game between the RN and Army opened proceedings.

The RN took the lead in the first five minutes but the Army fought back and finished the first quarter ahead.

With controlled play and solid defence, particularly from Logs(SC) Nelicia Thomas, the RN regained the lead and held on to it throughout the second and third quarters – they were four goals ahead at the end of the latter.

The Navy showed complete determination and discipline despite a strong Army attempt to come back, and with good shooting from LMA Sam Dugmore and excellent leadership by team captain AB Gemma Williams, the RN won the match by two goals.

The open team tournament began with the RN facing the RAF, who attacked from the first minute and never let up.

Despite the Navy continuously breaking down the RAF zones, with excellent controlled centre court play from LLogs(SC) Camilla Hodgson and captain Lt Sasha Miller, the RAF were the stronger team.

Their team play indicated that they regularly played together and they never gave any break from their aggression and sheer determination to win at all costs.

The Navy were able to gain a number of interceptions with superb defensive work from LPT Emma Phillips, and they turned the ball, but the sheer pressure from the strong RAF team was too much and these interceptions were unfortunately not converted into goals. Ultimately the best team won the match, but it was a match that brought out the best in the RN centre court and defensive play.

Next up in the open championships were the Army – another team which attacked from the off.

Although the Army took the lead up to the first half of the match, the Navy came back in the fourth quarter with equal goals from both sides. Despite this disciplined fightback, the gap was too wide and the Army won the match comfortably.

The excellent defending skills and number of interceptions by LPT Emma Phillips in both the GD and GK positions fully deserved her winning the accolade of RN player of the match.

The sailors' final clash was the development game against the RAF and they got off to a good start, pulling ahead – only for the RAF to quickly close the gap.

For three quarters of the match, the RN and RAF fought equally for control with LWtr Eloise Smith shooting accurately despite the pressure.

With further goals from LMA Dugmore it looked at times as though the RN would win, however they could not get clear of the RAF. Despite strong leadership from AB Williams once again, the Air Force stole some interceptions and began to pull away.

In an extremely tense final quarter which was fought hard by both sides, and despite excellent RN defending by Surg(D) Lt Jess Hall, MA Rachel Jellings and Logs (SC) Nelicia Thomas, the RAF won by four goals.

Although the Navy didn't win this year's championship, the talent in the development team is extremely promising. With the introduction of a grass-roots feed into RN netball, and the possibility of a bigger squad throughout the training season to support the open squad, they are looking like strong contenders for a Navy-hosted win in 2012.

More details from Lt Linda Harris at BRNC-QCO (93749 7141) or LPT Emma Phillips RALEIGH-PTRI17 (9375 41394).

A bout time too

NEARLY 300 people squeezed into the gym at HMS Raleigh to watch the inaugural RN East v West charity **boxing** show.

The event consisted of three two-minute rounds with three points awarded to the winner and one to the loser, with the East triumphing overall by five bouts to four.

ABs Martin 'Oscar' Wilde, John Norton and Oluwaseyi DaDa, who are all undergoing their specialist training at HMS Raleigh were part of the RN West team.

Norton won in the first round after the referee stopped the contest.

DaDa was also victorious, winning the boxer of the night in a closely contested bout with LPT Scot Jackson (HMS Northumberland).

The display of sheer stubborn effort by both boys, with neither boxer giving ground; had the crowd on their feet applauding for many minutes afterwards.

AB Wilde lost narrowly on points over three rounds in a tremendous battle of skill and fitness with AB Rob O'Donnell (HMS Drake).

The bout ebbed and flowed as each boxer attempted to outwit his opponent.

In another courageous battle Cpl 'Pusser' Hill (CTCRM) came out the winner on points against Mne Mick Binstead, a member of the RN team who is currently based at Nelson.

All competitors were professional throughout, and very sportsman like in losing.

"After a 15 year absence to re-introduce the noble art of boxing back to Raleigh in such explosive manner, was the PT department's intention," said WO1 Dale Randle, Raleigh's PT officer.

"The bouts were so evenly matched that all the boxing produced fine displays of skill, fitness, courage and determination. The tremendous amount of commitment and resolve exhibited by the boxing, was fully appreciated by the large amount of spectators."

The event raised around £3,000 for RN Charities.

Picture: Dave Sherfield, HMS Raleigh



7s heaven for Fijians

IF YOU'RE Fijian, connected with the Navy, love rugby and love helping the community, a new **rugby 7s** team is just the ticket.

The Seahawk Islanders comprises 95 per cent Forces personnel – three quarters of whom are Senior Service – who hail originally from Fiji.

The squad is open to both rugby codes and the side will be appearing at as many tournaments as possible this season, including the Saracens 7s at Penryn, with the goal eventually of sending a squad to the world-famous Dubai 7s.

On the community level, the team holds touch rugby games with schools, including St John's College in Southsea, and promotes the game by visiting education establishments.

In addition, the team knuckles down to non-rugby-related community work where possible, such as providing cakes for St Ronan's Nursing Home and the players intend to return to the Southsea home to carry out some renovation work.

"Apart from playing rugby, we aim to give something back to the community that we live amongst," says team manager LS Tok Aisake (HMS Nelson).

For details, contact Tok at tokatron@gmail.com or visit the team's websites www.seahawkislanders.com and www.facebook.com/seahawkislanders

SPORT



Lucy joins the RN sporting hall of fame

THE Navy's top female **boxer** has joined the exalted ranks of the Forces' sporting elite as Sportswoman of the Year – a title once held by Olympic gold medalist Dame Kelly Holmes.

It's the third time Lt Lucy O'Connor (*pictured above by Harland Quarrington*) has been nominated at the Combined Services Sports Awards.

A regular in these pages for the past few years and, until a recent temporary illness, captain of the Great Britain Women's Boxing Team, the 32-year-old lieutenant has her sights set on stepping into the ring for the nation at the 2012 Games.

She was presented with her award in the presence of Princess Anne at the RAF Club in Piccadilly.

"I'm absolutely delighted. I'm hugely humbled by my fellow nominees and their amazing achievements," the junior officer said.

"It is third time lucky! I've always wanted one of these beautiful awards, so I'm very lucky today. It'll go pride of place on the mantlepiece obviously!"

Lt O'Connor has been ranked as high as No.1 in Great Britain and No.3 in Europe and divides her time between rigorous training and naval duties.

She added: "It's been an immense learning curve and an immense experience.

"Over the last five years I've managed to go all over the world with the Great Britain squad, so I've been extremely fortunate to have done what I've done so far."

She said: "2012 is the goal. I'm back on fitness now so it's a case of competing and getting back in the ring."

With featherweight not featuring at the London Games, she has had to drop down to flyweight.

"Losing the weight was tough but necessary; I didn't think I would be as strong at the larger weight range," Lt O'Connor said.

"I've got the national championships coming up and hopefully the internationals toward the end of the year, just so I can get my hand back in. Then there are the qualifiers for the Olympics next year."

Also present at the awards ceremony was former England rugby ace and RAF pilot Rory Underwood, who won the sportsman of the year award in 1987.

The sportsman of the year award went to the Army's Maj Angus McLeod for his achievements in target rifle shooting.



● *Le crunch... A fierce tackle from a Royal Marines Commando halts a French attack during the RN's narrow victory at The Brickfields* Pictures: PO(Phot) Paul A'Barrow, RNAS Culdrose

Two down, one to go...

IN THE world of Royal Navy rugby union, it doesn't get much better than this.

Two mortal foes despatched – first the French, then the RAF (the latter utterly annihilated) – just the Army to come as the senior XV steamrollered through the business end of the season.

To Plymouth Albion RFC first and a clash with the French Navy (*la Marine Nationale*) – a game which has fittingly become nicknamed 'le crunch'.

The contest between the respective senior sides concluded a day of firsts for Royal Navy Rugby.

Earlier, the Royal Navy women faced their French counterparts for the first time at HMS Drake.

This was a game of 10s, due to the French not being able to play a full 15-a-side game.

Making good use of their experienced 7s players and with superior pace across the width of the pitch, the match was a one-sided affair in favour of the visitors. The result was disappointing for the home side who went down 45-0.

In the evening, the action shifted to The Brickfields. Owing to the standard and nature of this fixture, it was to be the first time that the Royal Navy Rugby Union would be awarding caps outside the Inter-Service Championship Games.

The RN were boosted by the return of England 7s International Cpl Greg Barden, fresh from Hong Kong, Cpl Gaz Evans (Plymouth Albion) and Logs(CS) Josh Drauniniu (London Welsh).

The match started with both teams testing each other's defence and resolve with some straight hard running from the French back row following several deft chips over the top of the Royal Navy defensive line from the French Navy (and Toulon) fly half.

All of this was met by strong Royal Navy defence and counter-attack. Navy fly half POET(WE) Wayne John, continually caused the visitors problems, breaching the French defences several times.

However, the partisan crowd, which included a significant number of Senior Service personnel, had to wait until 25 minutes for the first score.

A Royal Navy scrum on the French ten-metre line provided a launch pad for an attack down the blind side, outnumbering the French defence to give S/Lt Andy Vance a glimpse of space. With only the full back to beat, the ever-present Drauniniu was on hand to take an inside pass and cover the remaining 22m to score the first try of the night (5-0).

This try signalled a step-up in tempo as the RN repeatedly broke through the French defence to put them under pressure in the tackle area.

A high tackle on AB Mark Roberts by a French second row resulted in a yellow card and presented Navy skipper POAET Dave Pascoe with an easy shot at goal. This was soon followed by another penalty, putting the home side ahead 11-0.

The French were not going to be outdone and just before the end of the half, scored a converted try from a scrum on the Navy's five-metre line, to go into the break at a respectable 11-7.

As the weather closed in, the second half became a war of attrition with the almost inevitable frustrations on both sides.

Another penalty increased the Brits' lead to 14-7. However, a momentary lack of discipline reduced the Navy to 14 men for ten minutes and provided the French with an opportunity to reduce this margin by three points (14-10). It was the Navy skipper Pascoe who was then to give the Navy a two-score lead as he converted his fourth penalty of the night: 17-10.

Not giving an inch, the French kept up a naval barrage, taking all opportunities to put the Navy line under constant pressure.

The dying minutes of the game saw a final gasp from the visitors who tried to use their powerful mauling technique from a lineout on the Navy's five-metre line. But it was not to be, and a French player knocked the ball on as he crossed the line. The final play of the match was a five-metre scrum to the Navy, with a clearance on the final whistle.



● *Powerhouse PO Wayne 'Cowboy' John (HMS Liverpool) struggles free from a French tackle*

As on previous occasions, this was a contest in which no quarter was given. Tough and uncompromising rugby resulted in a well-deserved victory for the Royal Navy who thus regained the Babcock Trophy.

The first round of the 2011 Inter-Service competition saw the RAF host the Navy at Newbury RFC.

The day had already seen success for RNRU with an emphatic win for the Navy Mariners over the RAF Vultures 40-3. Sadly, the RN Women were unable to repeat last year's win over the RAF losing 26-0.

This set the scene for the Royal Navy Senior XV to start their campaign to retain the Babcock Inter Service Trophy. The opening 20 minutes was a bruising affair as the RAF made it very clear that on their own ground they would be a force to be reckoned with. However, a well-worked move following a lineout saw Cpl Calum MaCrae (CTCRM) exploit a gap in the RAF midfield and with the ever-present Josh Drauninu on his shoulder the Navy took a seven-point lead.

It was MaCrae who three minutes later joined Josh on the score sheet to pick up the Navy's second try, captain Dave Pascoe (771 NAS) converted: 14-0.

The RAF received a triple bonus as the Navy were first reduced to 14 men for ten minutes, then gave the RAF replacement stand-off an opportunity to get the first RAF points on the board (14-3). The RN then lost stand-off Wayne John (HMS Liverpool) to a mouth injury which brought Mne (Scott) Llewellyn (CLR) on as his replacement.

Lt Niall Copeland (Collingwood), a late replacement for Capt Stu Mclaren RM (RAF Halton DMOC) due to a short-notice operational deployment, scored the third try of the night and the last of the first half (19-3).

The second period started with the Navy inflicting a quick score on the RAF from a lineout and ensuing play Cpl Grieg Barden (HMNB Portsmouth) was driven over the RAF try line for an unconverted try (24-3). This was followed four minutes later by Llewellyn scoring his second try of the night, converted by Pascoe (31-3).

The RN coaching team started to implement the changes by replacing the whole front row which gave S/Lt Tom Blackburn (Sultan) his first cap.

These changes would make little difference to the Navy style of play as Drauninu scored his second converted try of the night following a passage of open running rugby (38-3).

After a series of penalties on the RAF five-metre line, the referee lost patience and as the RAF collapsed a driving maul and awarded the Navy a penalty try (45-3). With most of the RN replacements on the last to make an appearance and earn his first cap was LPT Gareth Cadmore (Raleigh).

The evening was rounded off by the man who had started the scoring as Drauninu completed his hat-trick making the final score (52-3).

Next stop, Twickenham, Saturday May 7 and that match with the Army to retain the trophy wrested from soldiers' hands 12 months ago.

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Breaking point: Crete 1941

SUNDAY May 18 1941 was a rarity in the life of HMS Gloucester. It was a day in port – the first in five weeks.

For eight months the cruiser had barely been afforded any rest. Convoy duties. Escorting aircraft carriers. Delivering troops to Greece.

She had been bombed repeatedly. At least two had hit her – and failed to explode. Most recently she'd hit a mine and been struck by a bomb off Malta. Neither had caused significant damage.

The continuous action left HMS Gloucester looking tired. Her men, too, were tired. Today, as the ship refuelled in Alexandria, her Commanding Officer, Capt Henry Rowley, determined some of his men should be granted leave. Some hit Alex's hostelries, others headed a short distance outside the port to a rest camp, Sidi Bish, run by a padre.

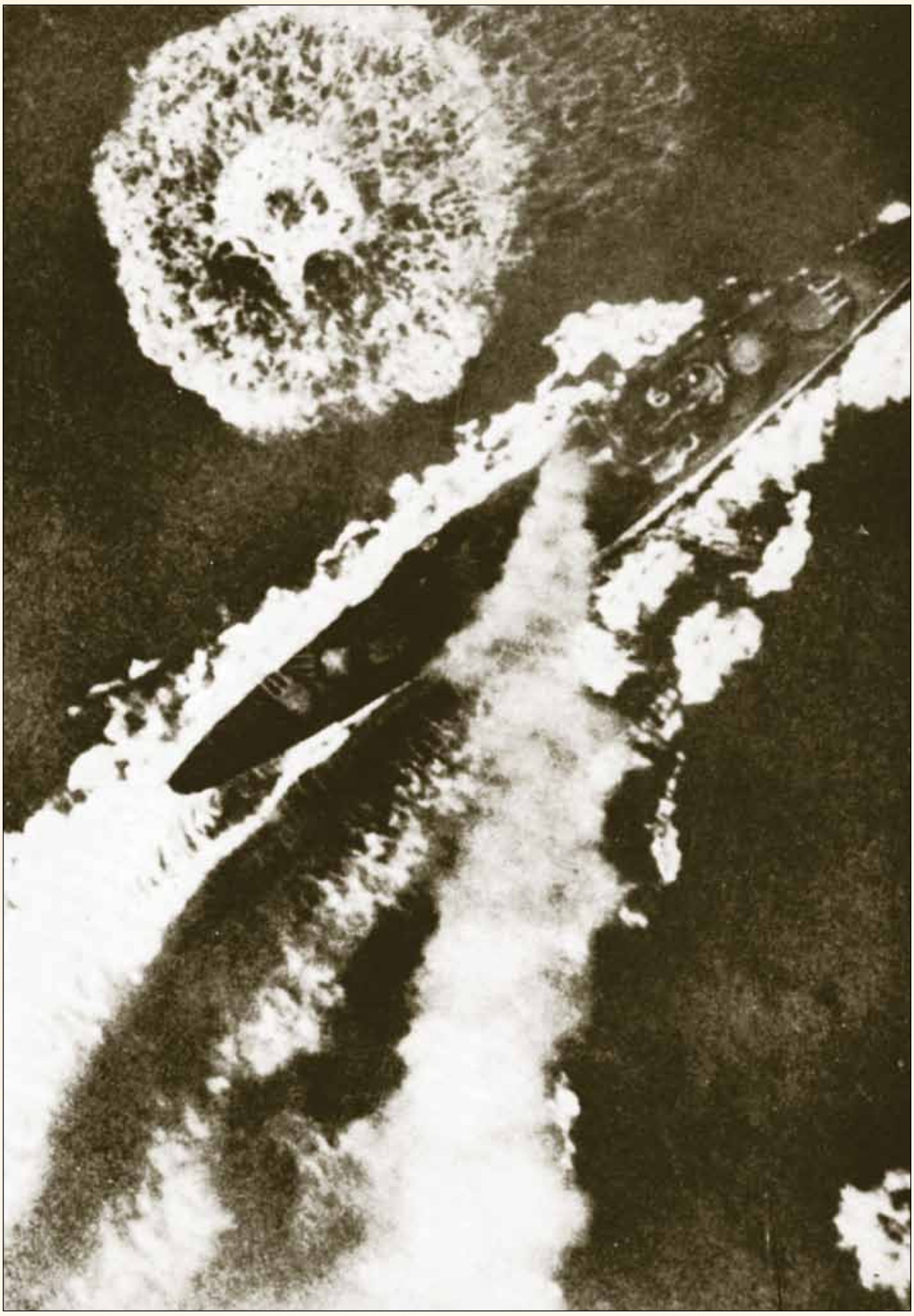
The cruiser's chaplain William Bonsey remained aboard, penning a letter to the family of two schoolfriends, both killed serving with the RAF. Bonsey thought Gloucester "a lovely ship", her crew "a grand lot". Above all, the Fighting G was a lucky ship. At Matapan she'd been straddled by shells from an Italian battleship "but no damage and no casualties". Italian radio had proclaimed Gloucester sunk on at least seven occasions. "Let's hope they will never be able to make those claims actual truth."

For days the airfields around Corinth and Piraeus had filled with Junkers tri-motors, the Ju52 – known affectionately as the *Tante Ju* (Aunt Ju) – and gliders of *Fliegerkorps* XI, the Luftwaffe's dedicated paratrooper transport unit. After dark the Junkers fired up their engines for a ground run. "Through clouds of dust we could see red glowing sparks flaring from the exhausts of the machines, and only by this light was it possible to discern the silhouettes of our men," wrote battalion commander Friedrich von der Heydte.

Von der Heydte was a man of culture, a lawyer, cavalryman, a committed anti-Nazi and, most recently, a *Fallschirmjäger* – paratrooper. Two days earlier he'd been summoned to the Hotel Grand Bretagne in Athens for a briefing. There he and his fellow paratroop commanders learned of Hitler's next objective: Crete.

Barely a month before, Germany's airborne troops – men who had been instrumental in the Blitzkrieg in Norway and the Low Countries in 1940 – had seized the Corinth canal. The men, almost all volunteers, young, confident, ambitious, perhaps a little cocky, were imbued with a spirit of victory. Dispensing withCrete "wouldn't be a problem", one noted, while another was told by his commander that the invasion of the Mediterranean would be "easy". The issue would be settled by the end of the first day.

For several days the officers of 5th *Gebirgs* (Mountain) Division had been scouring the ports of southern Greece for shipping. They found most harbours empty; the British had stripped them when withdrawing from the Greek mainland. "All that were left behind were clapped-out fishing cutters driven by petrol engines and half-torn sails," *Gebirgs* officer Hans Steet rued. They would have to suffice. By the end of the third week of May 1941, the harbours at Piraeus and the small port of Chalcis, 30 miles north of Athens, were filling with 100 or so of these 'floating coffins'. They would carry to Crete what the Aunt Jus and gliders could not deliver – heavy weapons, ammunition, mules, plus two battalions of Germany's fabled mountain infantrymen, *Gebirgsjäger*. Barely any of these clapped-out cutters, or caiques as they were known, or their cargoes would reach their destination.



● *'The holocaust of HMS Gloucester' – the Fighting G tries in vain to evade Luftwaffe dive-bombers on May 22 1941*

Oberleutnant Joachim Rücker set off on another sortie around the Greek islands in search of British warships. Today the young pilot felt "like a gadfly in the unforgettably beautiful world of the Greek gods" as he flew his twin-engined Dornier 17 bomber – its narrow fuselage earned it the nickname Flying Pencil – around the Sea of Crete.

There was no sight of the enemy – in the air or on the water. Only "rugged, steep, rocky islands rising out of the ocean" and "beautiful little islands covered in green from subtlest shades to the darkest tones".

His bomber passed over fishing villages, olive and orange groves. It was less a combat sortie than a pleasure flight. "I fly from island to island – like a butterfly from flower to flower – and cannot get enough of this magical world." It was a rare idyllic moment for Rücker. For four days his comrades in *Kampfgeschwader 2* – 2nd Bomber Squadron – had been pounding Crete.

The brilliant blue skies above the Mediterranean island vibrated constantly "with the noise of engines and anti-aircraft fire". It was too much for what little remained of the island's fighter defence: once 36 aircraft strong, it was now down to three Hurricanes and two Gladiators. That evening the RAF reluctantly decided to pull its fighters out of Crete. The skies over the eastern Mediterranean would belong exclusively to the Luftwaffe.

Many sailors were convinced that the RAF already *had* forsaken them. The messdecks of British warships in the eastern Mediterranean this May echoed with a refrain laced with not a little bitterness:

Roll out the Rodney, the Nelson, the Hood
Since the whole bloody Air Force is no bloody good.

Despite the incessant German air raids, Major General Bernard Freyberg was encouraged. In the few weeks since the evacuation of the Greek mainland, the Surrey-born New Zealander had forged 'Creforce' – 24,000 Commonwealth and 10,000 Greek troops – into a determined, if not well-equipped, force to defend the island. He visited his men frequently to check on their mood. "Everywhere all ranks are fit and morale is now high," he observed. "I do not wish to seem over-confident, but I feel at least we will give an excellent account of ourselves. With the help of the Royal Navy, I trust that Crete will be held."

It was late on Sunday afternoon by the time HMS Coventry reached waters off Crete. The two-day passage from Alexandria had been uneventful, but as the veteran cruiser neared the island "hundreds of pairs of eyes combed the skies for hostile aircraft". Her 25-year-old engines powered Coventry through the Mediterranean at full speed – 29kts – as she responded to an SOS from the hospital ship Aba. Clearly marked with the Red Cross, the former passenger steamer was bound for Palestine with more than 550 wounded soldiers aboard.

Since leaving the roadstead at Canea, Crete's capital, the previous day the Aba had been harassed by German bombers – and had called for protection. Now, a little after 5pm, the hospital ship's crew sighted HMS Coventry. As the two ships closed, a cry from the cruiser's radar operator: *Enemy aircraft approaching*.
In a matter of minutes eight aircraft were sighted: Stukas.

The dive-bombers circled like birds of prey, attacking in pairs, screeching, wailing as they hurtled downwards almost vertically.

The Stukas divided their attention between Aba and Coventry. The cruiser weaved furiously to avoid the rain of steel, while the ship's company threw up a wall of fire.

From the bridge, a war correspondent wrote: "Round after round screamed over our heads. We ducked under the terrific crack and blast of the firing. It was a shattering experience, especially when the tornado of hot air whisked off my steel helmet."

At least one Stuka neverthless got through this barrage and strafed the ship, striking the forward gun director.

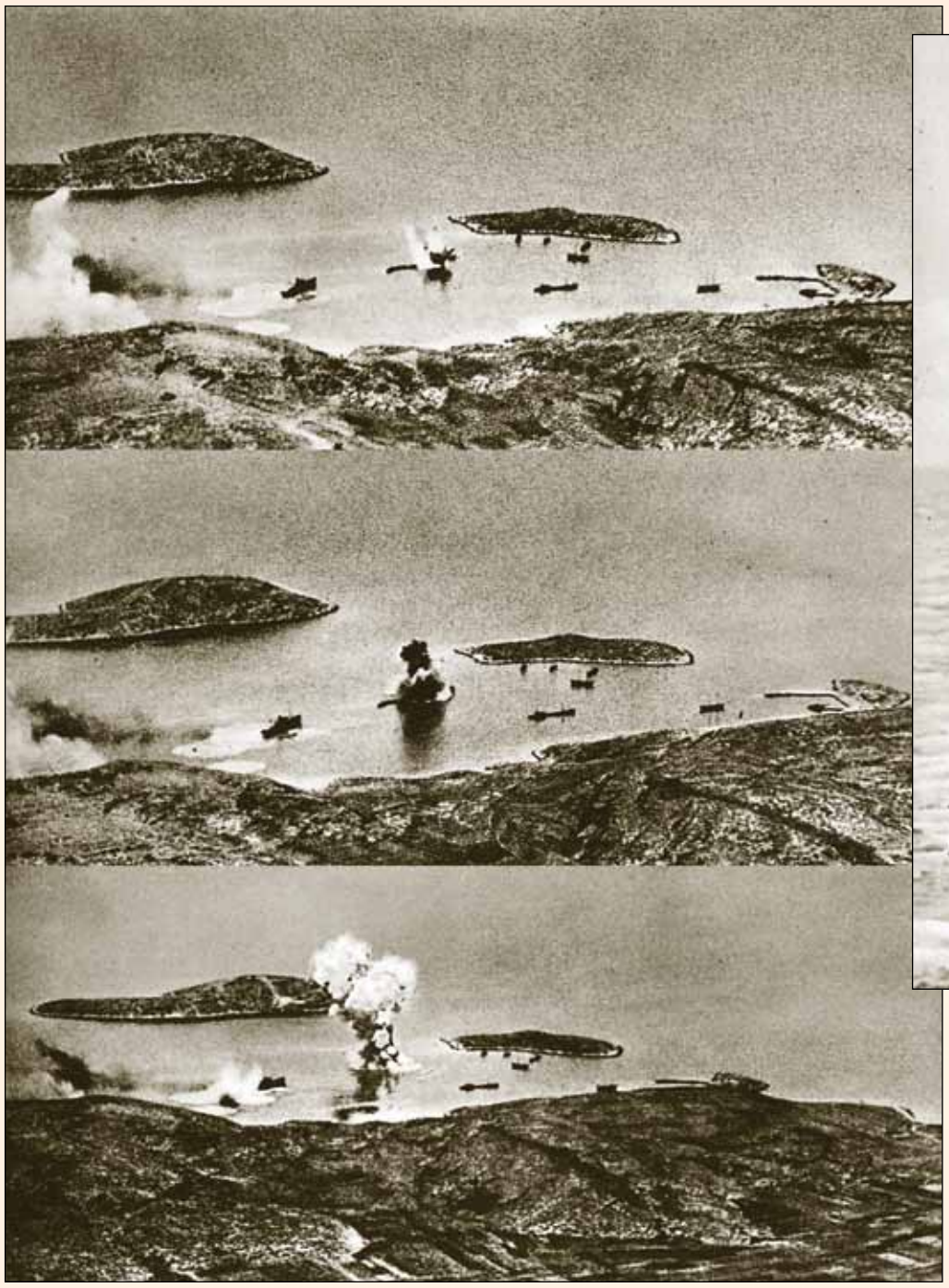
One bullet struck PO Alfred 'John' Sephton, passing through his body and striking AB Fisher next to him.

"Dave, I've been hit in the stomach," Sephton told a shipmate rather matter-of-factly.

"How bad, John? Can you keep on?"

"I can hardly see," came the reply.

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● *'The last Briton had been chased from the continent'... The Luftwaffe bombs a merchantman just off the Greek coast during Operation Demon*



● *'All that were left behind were clapped-out fishing cutters driven by petrol engines and half-torn sails'... A German propaganda photograph of mountain infantry in a Greek fishing cutter*

Continued from page i

Despite the mortal wound, the senior rating remained at his post, and although partially blinded and rapidly losing blood, he continued to direct the ack-ack fire until the Germans broke off the attack.

Only then were medics summoned to the wounded direction team, yet even now, Sephton insisted AB Fisher receive treatment first.

When the medics in the sick bay finally tended to the 30-year-old petty officer, Coventry's Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Dalyrymple Hay, felt compelled to include an addendum to the ship's daily orders.

He told his men that "every right to be proud of their splendid showing" that Sunday.

"Let us sincerely thank God that things have not been worse and pray that we may suffer no more casualties or hurts, and that our wounded may soon be well. And that by God's grace and mercy we may all pull through to enjoy times of lasting peace with our dear ones."

Coventry would not be spared "more hurts or casualties". Nor would "all pull through": Alfred Sephton died the following day and was buried at sea. He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross; his actions on May 18 1941 "may well have saved the Coventry and the Aba".

In Alexandria, the word flashed around the bars: Leave is cancelled. HMS Gloucester sails at midnight.

In the harbour, the admiral's barge drew alongside the cruiser as she finished refuelling. Admiral Andrew Browne Cunningham was troubled by the morale of Gloucester's crew. "They have been a long time from home and taken more bombs and mines than any other ship out here." A quick conversation with Capt Rowley confirmed ABC's suspicions. Gloucester's men were indeed tired. Cunningham was convinced a personal visit would "cheer them up" the next time she entered harbour.

HMS Gloucester cast off after dark and headed for Crete. She would never see Alexandria again. Nor too would eight more of His Majesty's ships, sunk in the bitterest battle the Royal Navy fought in the Mediterranean.

RISING out of the Aegean some 180 miles south of Athens, Crete is the last great island in the Greek archipelago. This barren, mountainous island, 160 miles long, is dominated by ranges intersected by a handful of valleys carrying mountain tracks. Its people for the most part live in the north, where the steep mountains gently taper into a narrow coastal plain. Here too lies the island's only infrastructure – a main road, three airfields and the only port of any note. But Crete's topography belies its importance in the late spring of 1941. By air Tobruk is less than two hours' distant, Alexandria less than five. Crete dominates the eastern Mediterranean, both for air forces and naval units. A *Daily Telegraph* correspondent observed:

Crete is a mighty bulwark of our seapower in the entire Mediterranean. Crete is a resting place between Europe, Africa and Asia. It is more important to the eastern Mediterranean than both Malta and Sicily combined.

London and Berlin alike realised the island's importance. Since war had come to the Balkans in the autumn of 1940, Winston Churchill had pressed for the Greek island to become a bulwark of the British Empire in the eastern Mediterranean. "To lose Crete because we had not sufficient bulk of forces there would be a crime," he pontificated.

Except that for all the bluster, Britain could not provide Crete with the "sufficient bulk of forces" demanded. The nation's position as 1940 ended was precarious at home and abroad, her resources stretched to breaking point. The Mother Country needed safeguarding against invasion and the almost daily onslaught from the Luftwaffe. The Army was locked in battle with the Italians in Libya and East Africa. Greece needed supporting. So too Malta.

As 1941 opened, Britain's Mediterranean position worsened. The Luftwaffe had now joined battle – and almost immediately knocked out HMS Illustrious. Hitler had dispatched an armoured force to help the Italians in Libya – the *Afrika Korps*. In a matter of weeks, the panzers had routed much of Britain's force in the desert and invested Tobruk.

And in April 1941, Hitler turned his attention to the Balkans: Yugoslavia, which has just ousted its pro-Nazi ruler and replaced him with the pro-British teenage Peter II, succumbed to the Germans after 11 days. Greece threw in the towel a week later. On the morning of Sunday April 27, the first German soldiers marched into the Greek capital and raised the swastika over the Acropolis. German expatriates showered the entering troops with flowers and cigarettes. Athenians showed their contempt for the occupiers. The streets were empty, the windows of every house and apartment closed, despite the heat. "It was an old Greek custom," recalled Petros Haris. "A house which mourned never opened its windows. And that day every house in Athens had a death – the same death." In Alexandria, the Mediterranean Fleet received its final message from the radio station in the Greek capital: *Closing down for the last time. Hoping for happier days. God be with you – and for you*. Then the airwaves fell silent.

While the Greeks mourned and the Germans celebrated, the Royal Navy carried out its second enforced evacuation from the continent in less than 12 months. The scale of the evacuation paled compared with Dunkirk, but the means were limited, the planning hurried, verging on chaotic, and air cover for the warships and merchantmen sent to lift Allied troops was minimal.

By Sunday April 27, the ports and bays of the Peloponnese were filled with shipping embarking weary Commonwealth soldiers and RAF ground crews.

Dawn this Sunday found a convoy moving sluggishly out of the Gulf of Nauplia, 60 miles south-west of Athens. Racing low over the bay fighter pilot *Oberleutnant* Berthold Jung, sighted "a 20,000-tonne steamer" – actually the 11,000 troop transporter Slamat. Jung led one of two flights of Messerschmitt 109s, armed with bombs, in search of targets this morning. His bombs missed the transporter – he released his payload too early – but not the second group, which fell upon the Slamat and crippled her with two direct hits. As Jung banked over the gulf, he could see the merchantman already lowering boats into the water. The fighter pilot set course for home.

As flames ravaged the Slamat, destroyer HMS Diamond moved in to rescue the 500 troops aboard the former Dutch liner. As the destroyer came alongside the stricken ship, the Luftwaffe returned. Diamond broke away from the Slamat with such force and speed that a lifeboat capsized, drowning several men.

Other sloops and boats were strafed as Jung's Me109s compounded the Slamat's agony. Back at base, the fighter commander – a sailor in peacetime – berated his comrades and forbade such actions in future. "If there are shipwrecked sailors in lifeboats, then they're already poor wretches and that should be the end of it."

By late morning all who could be saved from the Slamat had been saved – a good 600 men on Diamond, perhaps 100 on the aged destroyer Wryneck. Diamond scuttled the blazing Slamat with a torpedo, then steamed south for Crete.

By early afternoon the ships had passed the tip of the Peloponnese and were barely 70 miles from Crete. The Luftwaffe gave them no respite.Dorniers. Stukas. Messerschmitts. Signals from the warships became increasingly desperate: *Am constantly being dive-bombed*; *request fighter protection*; *request immediate fighter protection*.

Shortly after 1pm, a couple of bombers singled out Diamond. Perhaps as many as nine Stukas focused on the Wryneck. The former sank in eight minutes, the latter in no more than 15. For good measure, the German pilots ignored the admonishments they had received earlier and machine-gunned survivors in the water. In all, some 700 men were lost, among them one Thomas Busby, brother of a young footballing coach in the Army: Matt Busby.

The Gulf of Nauplia disaster was the darkest hour of Operation Demon – the official codename for the evacuation of Greece. More than two dozen vessels – two of them hospital ships – were sunk by the Luftwaffe in the last week of April 1941, condemning more than 2,000 sailors and troops to a watery grave. But as at Dunkirk 11 months before, the German Air Force had been unable to halt the bulk of the evacuation. More than 50,000 men were rescued by the time the final ships departed on the penultimate day of April. The rescued were tired, harried, but above all grateful. They showed, wrote Andrew Cunningham, "admirable discipline and spirit". But ABC could not ignore the fact that Demon had placed "a very severe strain on both men and material of the Mediterranean Fleet". Sailors had endured "many days almost without rest under conditions of great discomfort with their ships crowded with troops under constant air attack".

The destination for all the Demon ships initially was the great natural harbour of Suda Bay in Crete. Some of the troops were shipped on to Egypt, others remained on the island of King Minos to bolster its defences. "It had been decided that the island must be held," Cunningham wrote, "and that an attack was inevitable."

As they had done at Dunkirk, the Germans trumpeted another triumph over the English – always *Engländer*, never *Briten*. More than 13,000 'English' had fallen into German hands during the three-week thrust through the Balkans.

"The last Briton had been chased from the continent," crowed the official historian of Germany's Twelfth Army, which had bludgeoned its way to Athens. "This unique campaign in the Balkans had proved once again the truth of the Führer's words: To the German soldier, nothing is impossible."

Despite such rhetoric, Adolf Hitler believed that some tasks *were* beyond his soldiers – chief among them, the capture of Crete.

His strategists had chewed over the invasion of the island through the autumn and winter of 1940... as well as the invasions of Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, the French Fleet at Toulon and the Suez Canal.

And one by one, these plans had been discounted. Seizing Gibraltar needed the assistance of Spain and Franco's price for entry into the war was too high for Berlin. The Navy wanted to eliminate Malta. So too the Luftwaffe. But Hitler baulked at the idea – it seemed too difficult. As did the capture of Crete.

In Berlin, Kurt Student followed events in the Balkans with growing impatience. Since May 1940 his airborne troops had done nothing – nothing but train. They had trained for the invasion of Britain. Cancelled. They had trained for the assault on Gibraltar. Cancelled. They had never trained for Crete, but Student and his staff had drawn up plans for an assault on the island. The 50-year-old general had filed the plans away, but with the fall of Greece imminent he pressed for a conference with the Führer. On April 21, Adolf Hitler obliged in his command train Amerika. "The island could and should be taken through the air," Student impressed on his leader. Hitler was sceptical. "Crete's too big for this." But he allowed the *Fallschirmjäger* general to state his case. His paratroops would seize key points on the island – the airfield at Maleme ten miles west of the capital Canea, the capital itself and neighbouring Suda Bay, and further east, the airfields at Retimo and Heraklion either by simply setting down in Ju52 transporters and gliders or, around Canea, by parachuting. The capture of Crete, Kurt Student assured his Führer, would serve as "a fitting conclusion" to the Balkan campaign. Adolf Hitler agreed. Four days after his discussion with Student, he issued his 25th directive of the war and gave the invasion a codename: *Merkur*, Mercury. It was a plan of staggering scale and ambition – to land 13,000 men by air on an island held by the enemy; a similar number would come by sea once the northern shore of Crete had been secured. The only condition Hitler placed on the Mercury planners was time. "The attack should take place as quickly as possible," he insisted. "Every day earlier is a profit, every day later a loss."

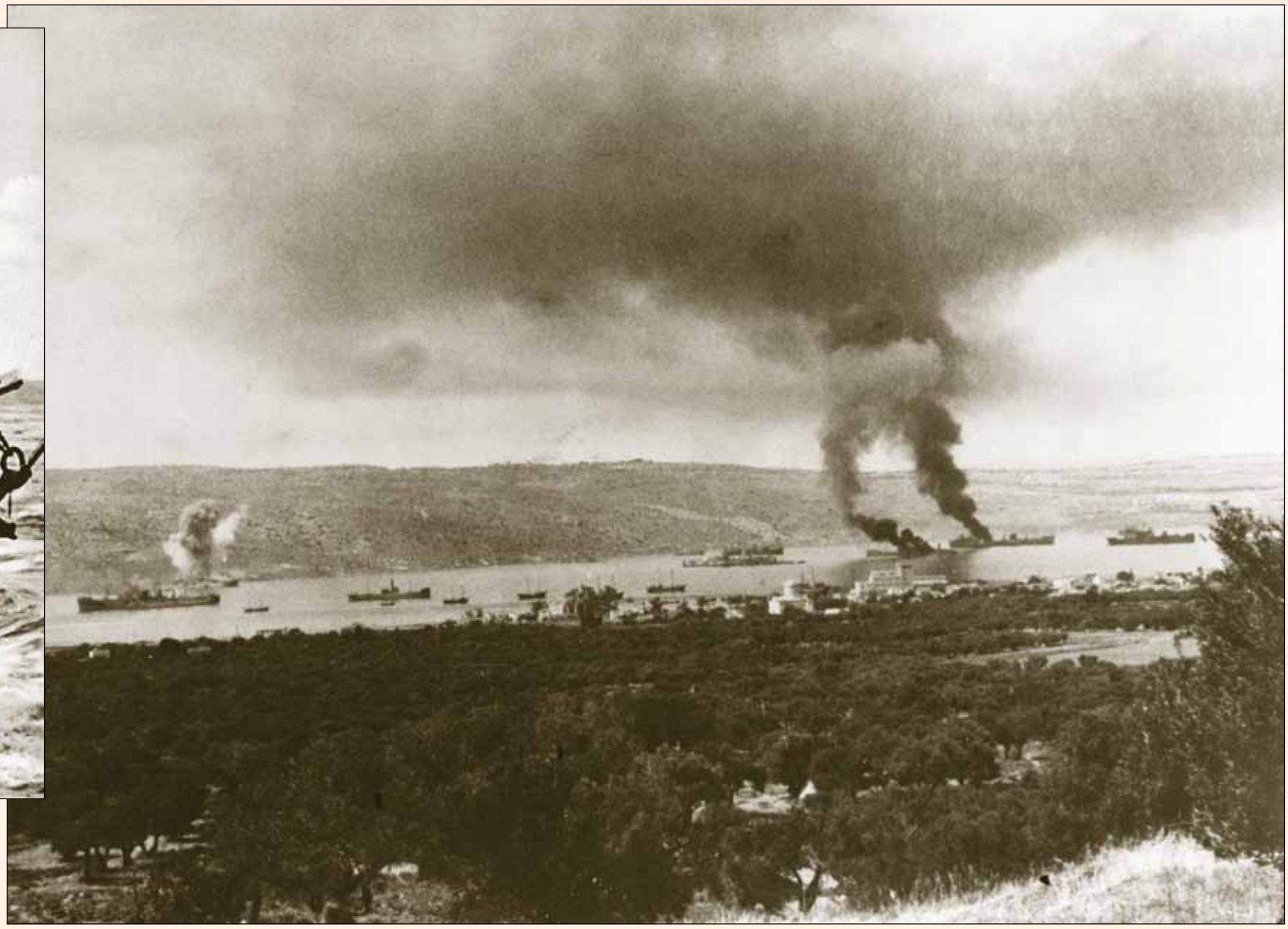
By Wednesday May 14, the German war machine was ready to begin its next onslaught and the aircraft of *Fliegerkorps VIII* (8th Air Corps) began to eliminate Crete's defences: ships, guns, airfields, camps, depots and communications were all singled out for destruction.

The light was fading over Athens this Wednesday as the Dorniers of *Kampfgeschwader* 2 flew past. The columns of the Acropolis cast long shadows. By the time the two flights of three bombers could make out the coast of Crete, darkness had fallen.

The only artificial light now came from tracers, racing up from the ground towards the approaching bombers – "a pearl necklace in every colour of the rainbow". The Dorniers dropped some of their bombs over the airfield at Heraklion low – so low that the blast almost knocked *Oberleutnant* Joachim Rücker's machine out of the sky.

As he banked sharply away from Crete hoping to escape the flak, Rücker sighted dark shapes on the water. "Warships. I could clearly make out six ships, including two cruisers." The ships were as alert as the airmen. Night turned to day as seemingly every barrel on every ship opened fire. "Suddenly a brief glow of fire in the sky," wrote Rücker. "It hangs there for a moment then falls like fiery rain into the sea and continues to burn. God, what was





● *'We have proved conclusively that a fleet cannot operate in waters within range of the Luftwaffe'... Palls of smoke rise above ships in Suda Bay after a German air raid*

Picture: Imperial War Museum E 3138E

that?"

The answer was provided back at base in the small hours of the 14th. One Dornier, codename Dora, had been shot down in flames. The sortie had not been without success, however. The freighter Dalesman was settling on the bed of Suda Bay.

In Athens' Hotel Grand Bretagne Student dined with the Luftwaffe's youthful Chief-of-Staff, Hans Jeschonnek, and its leading proponent of close air support Wolfram von Richthofen.

A cousin of the legendary, Red Baron and now commander of the mighty *Fliegerkorps VIII*, Richthofen wanted to return Crete to the Stone Age, to pulverise the island for four days, to destroy every aircraft, every ship, to eliminate every anti-aircraft gun, wipe out all means of communication, pummel every road, every bunker, every army camp, to demoralise every person on Crete. Student and Jeschonnek overruled him. Neither wanted to soften up the island or its defenders. Perhaps they were over-confident after Germany's procession of cheap victories. Wolfram von Richthofen stood his ground. "Blood is dearer than fuel and bombs," he snapped. He left the Hotel Grand Bretagne shaking his head. The injury Kurt Student had suffered 12 months previously in Rotterdam had obviously affected his judgment, left him "inflexible and unbelievably anti-war," Richthofen mused. The *Fliegerkorps VIII* commander had grave doubts about the success of the operation. There was one big hope: "that the enemy is even worse led and will also fight worse".

Bernard Freyberg spent this third week of May 1941 touring the defences of Crete and talking to defenders. "The visits have encouraged me greatly," he reported. "Everywhere all ranks are fit and morale is now high...I do not wish to seem over-confident, but I feel that at least we will give an excellent account of ourselves. With the help of the Royal Navy I trust that Crete will be held." In London, Churchill too awaited the coming battle with confidence. "I should particularly welcome [the] chance for our high-class troops to come to close grips with those people under conditions where the enemy has not got his usual mechanical advantages," he declared.

Early on May 19 the teletype machines chattered away again; intelligence reports suggested the assault on Crete would be unleashed the following day.

In the final hours of daylight this Monday May 19, the *Fallschirmjäger* began packing up and loading their equipment on to trucks, then climbed on board themselves for the short drive to the airfields. Morale was high. "Without exception they were volunteers," Friedrich von der Heydte wrote. "Any of three motives had induced these young fellows to volunteer for the parachutists: idealism, ambition or adventure." Idealists or not, the paratroopers laboured under some serious difficulties. The parachutes themselves were unwieldy and impossible to control; Student forsook control lines on the chutes so his men had both arms free to fire their pistols as they descended. Rifles and machine-guns were too bulky for the jumpers to carry – they were dropped in containers at the same time as the men leapt out of their aircraft. The gamble was that the men would reach the weapons cache before the stunned enemy could. The jumps themselves were also hazardous – accurate drops were only possible at heights of 400ft or below, exposing paratrooper and aircraft to the ground fire.

They would be jumping into the unknown. German intelligence was patchy at best, non-existent at worst. Aerial reconnaissance revealed only that Crete "appeared lifeless". There were perhaps three or four divisions on the island – anywhere between 15,000 and 100,000 men. The only certainty was that the defenders would fight to the last man to hold Crete.

On the airfields around Corinth and Piraeus they found an armada of transport aircraft waiting for them. Few men slept that night. "All of us are thinking of home, of parents, friends and fiancées," one *Fallschirmjäger* recorded in his diary. "Even the toughest soldiers can dream." The soldiers wrote letters home – possibly their last – talked amongst themselves and waited anxiously for the first flicker of dawn, when the lumbering Ju52s would begin rolling down the runways. At 4am on the 20th, the sun began to glimmer beyond the horizon. On the airfields the controllers flashed their torches and the Junkers began to gather pace, before rising slowly into the air, some carrying paratroopers, others towing gliders. Destination: Crete.

SHORTLY after 6.30am on Tuesday May 20 the calm over Maleme airfield was shattered as first *Fliegerkorps VIII*'s twin-engine bombers then Stukas pummelled the New Zealand defenders. "The noise was indescribable," one wrote. "The ground shuddered under us. We lost count of time." In the bombers' wake came the Ju52s hauling the first glider assault wave – but despite the aerial bombardment, the defenders of Maleme had not been eliminated; the glider men were quickly pinned down. Far to the west, in the town of Kastelli another German battalion was mauled on landing, this time by Greek forces – joined by the local population in an armed uprising. Worse still was to come on the slopes south of Maleme, where Luftwaffe reconnaissance had failed to pick up New Zealand troops dug in. As the first German paratroopers leapt out of their Ju52s they were raked with machine-gun fire. All the officers were killed or wounded, weapons caches and containers landed among the enemy and those paratroops who did land alive were unable to form an effective fighting force, pinned down by the New Zealanders' fire. Of the 600 paratroopers in the battalion, 400 were dead.

Nor were things any better around the Cretan capital. The paratrooper leading the assault on Canea was killed in a glider crash before he even reached the island. The remaining glider forces were either mauled during or after landing. When a second wave of Junkers carrying paratroopers flew in, the Ju52s were scattered by flak fire and the jumpers were met by volleys of small arms fire. In many cases, the paratroopers "were practically all killed, either in the air or soon after." Fate only seemed to favour Friedrich von der Heydte and his men this morning. His battalion dropped near an Italian prisoner of war camp in the appropriately-named Prison Valley, where the only opposition came from anti-aircraft guns. The atmosphere was almost serene. "It was remarkably quiet, almost peaceful. Apart from the drone of the homing aeroplanes, there was no sound – no human voice, nor even a rifle shot."

As Tuesday morning progressed, the scattered paratroopers gathered, regrouped and tried to take the high ground to the south of Canea – key if the Germans were to seize the capital. Two assaults were bloodily repulsed on Pink and Cemetery Hills before the paratroopers conceded defeat. Far from being demoralised, the Commonwealth forces were "fully fit for action and fought with extreme courage and tenacity". The attack on Canea had failed.

In Athens, Kurt Student assumed Mercury was running to plan – all but seven of the Ju52 transport aircraft which hauled or dropped the first attack wave returned to their bases. Student took it as a sign that the assault had succeeded and ordered a second wave of aircraft in.

At Maleme the arriving Junkers whipped up clouds of dust. Pilots lost control and careered into already-landed Aunt Ju's or were shot up as they came in.

Seventy-five miles to the east at Heraklion the transport aircraft flew into a wall of flak. Some of the aircraft simply exploded in mid-air, troops jumped out as their chutes caught fire and plummeted to the ground, more still were killed as they floated gently to earth. "The sky was lit up by German parachutists who became balls of flame as they leapt from aeroplanes set on fire by anti-aircraft fire," one British soldier recalled. "Many were burnt to death as they fell." Those which did land tried to regroup and take Heraklion's airfield and the town itself. Both assaults failed; the attack on the airfield cost 420 casualties.

The mood in Athens and on the Luftwaffe airfields in southern Greece that night was sombre. "Depressing rumours were circulating about huge losses by our paratroopers," one Junkers pilot recalled. "It was even said that Merkur might have to be abandoned." Kurt Student's initial satisfaction had turned increasingly sour as May 20 progressed. The first confused and incomplete reports of success had given way to concern and alarm. By nightfall he still had no clear picture of the situation on Crete. "This first day of the Crete operation was a really long one and strained my nerves," Wolfram von Richthofen noted in his diary. Richthofen was *always* right. The invasion of Crete had confirmed all his fears about the plan and about Kurt Student – he thought the paratroop general indecisive, his morale suspect, never more so than now. But now was the time to stand firm, Richthofen argued.

Up till now, the enemy has always gone soft in front of us and for me it's always been a rule in every campaign that things always turn out right if you stick to something from the outset. Why should it be different here?

In Crete, General Freyberg felt reasonably satisfied with the first day of battle. His men still held the airfields at Retimo, Heraklion and Maleme, but he warned that the "margin by which we hold them is a bare one – it would be wrong of me to paint [an] optimistic picture. Everybody here realises vital issue and we will fight it out."

After dark this Tuesday, 30 cutters cast their lines in Piraeus harbour and headed south carrying a battalion of German mountain infantrymen. The *Gebirgsjäger* did not climb aboard the battered fishing boats willingly. They would have preferred to fly to Crete. Their commander Julius Ringel – who would fly to the island – regarded the seaborne mission as "crazy. Anyone connected with Mercury felt uneasy about it – to say the least. Those who did go by boat viewed the mission with horror." The caiques carried an assortment of troops, equipment, ammunition – a typical manifest for one of these 100-tonne boats was 150 troops, two dogs, a dozen mules, one flak gun and 12 dozen shells, four tonnes of ammunition, and eight or nine motorcycles. The men were handed life jackets or cork belts as they filed aboard, while the German Navy provided a sailor on each caique as an expert mariner. They corralled the flotilla by megaphone and, in some cases, navigated using pocket compasses. Before dawn on the 21st a second flotilla of *Gebirgsjäger* set sail from Chalcis. One cluster of caiques made for the Spathi peninsula, protruding ten miles into the Sea of Crete just west of Maleme, the second for Heraklion. At best the fishing vessels could make 7kts. It would be the morning of May 22 – at least – before they reached their destination.

Darkness too spurred the Mediterranean Fleet to close on Crete. From the west through the 20-mile-wide Antikithera Channel, from the east through the slightly wider strait between the eastern tip of the island and Kaso. The latter briefly bombarded the enemy airbase on Karpathos and parried a thrust by half a dozen Italian motor torpedo boats.

DAWN on Wednesday May 21 found the Mediterranean Fleet pulling away from Crete – and away from the Luftwaffe's attention – and foe off the island of Milos, a good 80 miles from their destination. To the west, the punch of Force A – battleships Warspite and Valiant – was steaming southeast. Cruisers Gloucester and Fiji – Force B – had scoured the waters off Cape Matapan and were also heading south-east to join forces with the dreadnoughts. A little further east another cruiser group, Force D, with Orion, Dido and Ajax, had swept the north-west coast of Crete. Finally, two hundred miles to the east Force C – cruisers Perth and Naiad – had searched the north-east coast of Crete as far as Heraklion. All the Royal Navy forces were escorted by a clutch of destroyers. And all had searched in vain for the anticipated enemy seaborne force.

Just a month before the airfield at Eleusina, a dozen miles north-west of Athens, had reverberated to the sound of Gloster Gladiators and Hawker Hurricanes. This morning the soundtrack was provided by 26 Junkers Jumo 211 engines as 13 Ju88s of *Lehrgeschwader 1* idled on the standings. In a five-minute spell, all 13 bombers took off and headed south. It took barely an hour for the formation to reach the skies west of Crete where they found two clusters of warships – one centred around battleships HMS Warspite and Valiant, the second around cruisers Gloucester and Fiji. The Ju88 of observer *Feldwebel* Emil

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● *Kurt Student, father of the German paratroop arm and architect of the invasion of Crete*

Continued from page iii

Schaller aimed at the latter. "We dived extremely low [and] encountered heavy anti-aircraft fire of all calibres," he recalled. The 1,000lb bomb his Junkers dropped missed the cruiser. The cruiser did not, however, miss the bomber. A flak shell caused the right engine to overheat. The pilot was forced to shut it down until it cooled, then restarted the engine to limp back to Eleusina. As the Ju88 touched down, the damaged motor burst into flames – quickly followed by the wing.

"It was every man for himself," Schaller remembered. "The gunner jumped out first when we were doing 30 or 40 kilometres an hour. I was the second man out, then the radio operator, then the pilot, Oberleutnant Meier. I hadn't followed the correct order and got a terrible slap on the wrists!

All the crew got out. Seconds later, the bomber blew up.

In Valletta, Capt Lord Louis Mountbatten returned to HMS Kelly after the morning ashore conferring with the four commanding officers of his destroyer flotilla – 'The Fighting Fifth'. Orders had just arrived to sail for the waters west of Crete to support the heavy naval forces already there.

Mountbatten's ships had enjoyed ten days in Grand Harbour after convoy duties, attempting to intercept Rommel's supply line to North Africa and bombarding Benghazi.

The days in Valletta were not days of rest – Malta was bombed more than 20 times. Mountbatten ordered half his ship's company to sleep ashore in the air-raid shelters. He, however, steadfastly remained aboard his destroyer. "I didn't like to think what people would say if the Kelly was sunk in harbour and, when they asked where Dickie Mountbatten was, were told that he had been in an air-raid shelter," he recalled a quarter of a century later.

Back on board the Kelly, Mountbatten cleared the lower decks and told his 200-plus ship's company that they were bound for Crete.

"Make no mistake, things are going to be tough," he warned. "We've faced quite a bit of bombing already and I trust we're about to increase our score."

South-east of Crete, HMS Juno had already endured "quite a bit of bombing" this Wednesday. The attacks on Force C, which Juno was escorting, had been incessant for the past three hours. Shortly before 1pm, the destroyer's luck ran out. Three bombs struck the Juno – two landed in her aft engine compartment tearing it, and the ship, apart. "There was a blinding flash, the lights went out and I could just sense redness," recalled Juno's surgeon. There was no order to abandon ship – the men followed their instincts, racing up ladders as best they could to the upper deck before jumping into the sea. "Looking up from the water I could see the bows sliding under as the ship sank with no suction and hardly a ripple."

All that was left of Juno were 97 men bobbing in the water and a pall of black smoke hugging the ocean where a destroyer had once been.

In the breaks in air attacks, HMS Nubian, Kingston and Kandahar picked up the survivors – then prepared for the next Luftwaffe onslaught.

In Crete, Kurt Student had gambled everything on seizing Maleme airfield – and committed his resources accordingly. The Stukas plunged upon the airfield's defenders all day. A fresh wave of paratroopers was dropped. At least half the 550-strong battalion of *Fallschirmjäger* was cut down. Student decided to play his final card: 800 *Gebirgsjäger* flown straight into Maleme. No jumping, they would land directly on the airfield.

At Tanagra two dozen miles north of Athens, a battalion of mountain infantry clambered into waiting Ju52s. With all their kit, with lifejackets on, with the Mediterranean sun beating down on the metal fuselages of the three-engined transport aircraft, temperatures climbed to 60˚C and the 12 *Gebirgsjäger* in each aircraft sweated, their commander Julius Ringel remembered, "like in a sauna". The men left the doors and windows open and, as the Aunt Jus climbed over southern Greece, they stuck their heads out to catch the wind racing past the aircraft. Soon the arid vegetation and sparse villages gave way to more interesting sights. On the right the islands of Salamis and, in the distance, Aegina. On the left Athens "its streets swimming with people", Mount Lycabettos towering over the capital and the Acropolis. And now the Junkers were over the Sea of Crete, lumbering along at no more than 150mph. A shield of single-engined Me109 and twin-engined Me110 fighters closed around the formation. "There was no reference point now for the eye," the mountain infantry's commander Julius Ringel remembered. "Nothing but blue. The water. The heavens. This void was unsettling." After three-quarters of an hour a lump of rock rose out of the void. The island of Milos. And a little further south "a vast number of small sailing boats". The Junkers dropped down and flew low over the flotilla. The troops in the aircraft waved at the men below. The *Gebirgsjäger* in the boats waved back. The aircraft continued towards Maleme. Their passengers would never see most of their comrades in the caiques again.

As Julius Ringel and his mountain troops were making for Crete, a lone RAF reconnaissance plane searched the Sea of Crete for the German invasion force. It found it – and sent its report back to Egypt. Orders were swiftly issued. That night Cunningham sent three of his four forces – only the battleships of Force A were omitted – into the waters north of Crete to crush the approaching naval forces.

It was around 6pm as the first Aunt Jus banked off the Cretan coast to give Julius Ringel his first sight of the island. It was a glimpse into hell. "Columns of dust and smoke" rose above Maleme which was "strewn with ruins", while the surrounding landscape was peppered with the white silk of the paratroopers.

Fertigmachen! Get ready.

The mountain infantry clutched their rucksacks as the Ju52 touched down on the field. It jumped a couple of times on the rough strip before coming to a halt.

Raus! Everyone out!

The mountain infantry needed no encouragement. They jumped on to the sand and ran across the airfield, shooting their rifles and machine-guns on the move. They passed a Junkers rolling along the strip, trailing smoke and fire, as men tossed bundles on to the ground before jumping out of the door themselves. On the edge of the airfield, through the withered shrubs and thicket of cacti, a road embankment occupied by paratroopers. *Fallschirmjäger* and *Gebirgsjäger* joined hands. "We'd walked through the hell's gate of Crete," Julius Ringel observed.

By nightfall, Maleme was in German hands, held by a scratch force 1,800 strong. "The situation," Ringel recorded in his diary "appears to be balanced on a knife edge."

Night brought respite for the sorely-tested warships of Forces B, C and D. They had done remarkably well – apart from Juno only destroyer HMS Kingston suffered any substantial damage on May 21. The bombers of *Lehrgeschwader 1* alone hurled 67,300kg – 66 tons – of bombs at the Royal Navy this day. It reckoned one in ten of the bombs had hit its target: five warships damaged, another four "probably" damaged. But it wasn't sure. The British ships threw up furious flak in the face of the attackers and used "special tricks" – smoke screens – to hide their positions. In doing so, however, the warships had severely depleted their magazines. Dido and Orion had fired two-thirds of their anti-aircraft shells in just one day of battle. If the Luftwaffe returned with the same vigour on the morrow, the fate of the ships was obvious.

As Wednesday May 21 became Thursday May 22, Julius Ringel stood on the shore of Cape Spathia with his binoculars trying to make out the caiques he had seen off Milos eight hours earlier.

Nothing.

And then, a little after midnight, the glow of light to the north, sweeping across the sea, followed by a distant growl, then a dull reddish glow on the horizon. Julius Ringel stood transfixed. In his thick Austrian accent he cried out: "*Meine Buam*!" – My boys. The Royal Navy had found the invasion force.

For two and a half hours the waters off Cape Spathia were turned into a slaughterhouse. The searchlights of Force D – three cruisers and an identical number of destroyers – probed the water until they found their prey. "The ship's sails stand out white like a magnesium torch lit up by a beam from a searchlight," one German soldier remembered. He continued:

This is followed by a broadside. Shells come screaming at us; there are hits, steel splinters, wrecked timbers, yells from the wounded...

A fresh hit sets the ship alight. Some men are flung overboard by the blast from the detonation. Some had already jumped. They managed to reach a lifeboat and two dinghies. The ship sinks with a huge tongue of flame.

In the glow of searchlights and fire, Rear Admiral Irvine Glennie, Force D's commander aboard HMS Dido, could clearly make out the decks of the caiques packed with German soldiers. The boats flew the Greek flag, while their hostage Greek crews waved white flags. It appalled Glennie to do so, but he was forced to deal with them in the same way as he dealt with their "callous masters".

Under the guns of the Royal Navy, the caiques scattered and tried to make for Crete any way they could. The warships thrashed among them, sometimes running down the fishing boats, sometimes running down men in the water. Machine-guns raked the sea – the few German survivors of this hellish night testified that the men clinging to rubber liferafts or kicking around in lifejackets were shot at. No boats were lowered by the British to pull the shipwrecked out of the sea. In the days to come the Luftwaffe would show equal ruthlessness.

The only resistance was offered by the Italian destroyer Lupo, the sole warship escorting the caiques to Maleme. She received 18 6in shells this night, fired a salvo of torpedoes towards the attackers and, when the British warships withdrew, began picking up survivors.

Precisely how many *Gebirgsjäger* died this night is contested. Many German accounts overly-dramatise losses – one suggests just 37 men "half naked and exhausted" in two dinghies reached Spathia. Official figures record that 311 men out of 2,331 who left Greece were never accounted for. What is not contested is that the battalion of mountain infantry played no significant part in the fighting on Crete; just a single platoon saw action. The *Gebirgsjäger* were at home in the mountains, not on the sea. "In later conversations with them, that becomes entirely clear," one Dornier pilot recalled. "They never want to sail in a ship to Crete again."

The Royal Navy had succeeded in blocking the sea lanes to the islands. The price, however, would be fearful.

BY FIRST light on Thursday May 22, the victors of the night were still far from safety. Rear Admiral Glennie's force was making best speed to the southwest through the channel between Spithia and the island of Antikythira,18 miles off Crete. And it was there that a Luftwaffe reconnaissance aircraft found them. Its report was quickly passed to Wolfram von Richthofen. The Luftwaffe general resolved to "commit everything" against the Royal Navy – and he possessed more than 700 aircraft, over half of them bombers. He was as good as his word.

It was a little after dawn this Thursday when a lookout on HMS Griffin sighted German aircraft, first climbing, then "circling like hawks". And then the dive-bombers plunged in groups of three, one aircraft after the next, falling from 12,000ft.

"It was a classic attack," recalled Griffin's Lt Alec Dennis. "Technically interesting, physically terrifying." The four-strong force of ships – Griffin, Greyhound, Gloucester and Fiji – zig-zagged and weaved ferociously at speed. The cruisers threw up a wall of flak. Griffin fired her ancient 3in gun and machine-guns. It worked. "Somehow they missed us all."

A good 75 miles to the east, the cruisers and destroyers of Force C were still looking for the German convoy bound for Heraklion. Further and further north they sailed until, late in the morning, they came across the flotilla of caiques not two dozen miles from Milos. In view of the nighttime massacre off Maleme, the fishing vessel fleet had been ordered to return to port. Now, with British warships in sight, it seemed these caiques too would be annihilated.

But as the ships of Force C began to clear their throats, the Ju88s of *Lehrgeschwader 1* appeared. Pilot Gerd Stamp aimed at one of the two cruisers – Perth and Naiad. Even before he threw his bomber into its dive, flak shells were exploding all around it, leaving the sky pockmarked with black-brownish blobs of smoke. The moment had come to push the Junkers into a dive.

[The] cruiser shot at me with every gun barrel, and her speed was so fast that she forced me to flatten my dive... I pushed the button and the bombs dropped... All of a sudden there were cascades of water coming up my way. They shot at me with heavy artillery, planting water trees straight into my course. Any collision with them might have led to crashing into the sea...The bombs had hit the wake.

Gerd Stamp returned to his airfield, re-armed and was airborne again before mid-day, returning to harry Perth and Naiad. Bursts of flak shells in the Cretan sky revealed the cruisers' location – now somewhere north of Cape Spathia, hoping to join forces with the rest of the Royal Navy units west of Crete.

This time, I dived at a steeper angle, for a cruiser again [wrote Stamp]. I was right to do so, and the bombs were almost direct hits on both sides of the vessel.

When my Ju88 flattened out I had to go through the fire-shower again. There was no way out, and then came the ominous *wapp wapp wapp wapp*. We were hit.

Gerd Stamp nursed his stricken Ju88 back to base. As for Naiad, she counted 36 near-misses in one ferocious ten-minute spell. As her ammunition ran low, anti-aircraft cruiser HMS Carlisle came to her aid. AB Charles Hutchinson did not relish the prospect of joining the battle. "Wherever you looked there seemed to be ships – and they all seemed to be getting bombed," he wrote.

He was right. The Great-War-vintage warship merely succeeded in attracting the Luftwaffe's attention. And when they attacked, Hutchinson observed, the Germans were merciless. "They seemed to single a ship out and deliver a mass attack on it."

A 1,000lb exploded just next to Carlisle. "Tons of water crashed down on us, tearing us away from the gun and tossing us around like straw," wrote Hutchinson. "I was certain we would be swept over the side."

As they struggled to their feet, Hutchinson and his shipmates inflated their lifebelts, removed their boots and prepared to jump into the sea. The order to abandon ship never came. Carlisle's guns kept firing. The Luftwaffe kept coming. And the bombs kept striking.

One hit No.2 gun. "There isn't a gun now, just a piece of charred metal," Hutchinson wrote. "Nearly all the gun's crew were wiped out – a ghastly sight. We've lived and slept as a family for over a year and a half. Laughed, quarelled, joked, all gone ashore together, discussed our private lives."

It was now 1.30pm. The fleet had been subjected to air attacks continuously since daybreak – seven and a half hours earlier. It would be a good seven hours before night fell. Still, there was the hope now that safety in numbers might shield the ships. But as the battleships of Force A linked up with the cruisers of force C, three *Jabos* – Messerschmitt 109s armed with 500lb bombs, known throughout the Luftwaffe as *Jagdbomber* or Jabos (fighter bombers) – emerged from the patchy low clouds and focused on the Warspite. They pressed home their attack "with great determination", an official report noted. It was a "beautiful attack to watch".

Despite the size of the battleship, the first two 109s missed. Not the third. On his anti-aircraft gun, Jack Worth followed the path of the Messerschmitt, then watched as a "blob" detached from the fighter and hurtled for the Warspite, growing ever larger. Worth was convinced the 500lb bomb was aimed directly at him. It wasn't. It struck the 4in turret in front of him, tore a hole 100ft long in the forecastle deck and 50ft long in the battleship's side. The ensuing fire killed all but one man of Warspite's starboard 6in gun crew. At his ack-ack gun, Jack Worth recovered his senses and looked below. "What had been there before was now gone, replaced by a gigantic hole and a mess of flames and wreckage."

The attack cost the battleship more than 100 men – dead, wounded, missing. The sights below deck reminded her executive officer Cdr Charles Madden of "the descriptions in C S Forester's books of the carnage on the gun decks in Nelson's day". When he reported back to Warspite's bridge, "the calm blue afternoon seemed unreal after the dark and smelly carnage below".

Aboard HMS Gloucester, AB Arthur Stevens watched Warspite suffer a succession of blows. Her after turret was simply blown to pieces, the battleship slowed and trailed thick black smoke across the sea. "All the rage and temper and tears welled up in me – the frustration at seeing another capital ship damaged," he wrote.

The Fighting G would not be long spared the inferno.

It was the unfortunate demise of HMS Greyhound which sealed the fate of Gloucester – and HMS Fiji.

Amid the chaos of air attacks, a lone caique, survivor of the ill-fated nighttime convoy mauled by Force C, was sighted. Greyhound was dispatched to destroy her – and duly obliged.

Having broken formation, the Greyhound was singled out by enemy aircraft. Two – or possibly three – bombs struck in rapid succession and she went down within 15 minutes.

That at least gave many of her ship's company time to jump into the water, where some were rescued by Kandahar and Kingston. When the Luftwaffe returned, the destroyers abandoned their rescue mission, casting Carley floats into the water, hoping to return when the air attacks abated. But they did not abate. The Stukas peppered the sea with cannon fire, killing all 18 men in one whaler and many more clinging to rafts.

It was into this hell that Gloucester and Fiji were sent to provide air defence for Kingston and Kandahar so they could complete the rescue of Greyhound's survivors.

The two cruisers entered the fray at full speed, guns blazing at the swarms of enemy aircraft. The ships could not sustain this effort – both were low on ammunition. Soon Gloucester resorted to firing star shells in the vain hope they might scare the Luftwaffe.

They did not.

In a 15-to-20-minute spell the Fighting G was rocked by a succession of explosions – Arthur Stevens called it "the holocaust of HMS Gloucester". She lay dead in the water and began to roll over. Her death was sufficiently protracted for an orderly 'abandon ship'. Yet all who survived her final moments agree the sights aboard were horrific: men without arms, without legs, men burned alive. The ship's surgeons and sick bay attendants offered what help they could in the little time the ship had left, hurriedly applying bandages splinting broken arms and legs, issuing morphine to deaden the pain. A Royal Marine calmly directed shipmates to safety while the ship's executive officer, Cdr Reginald Tanner, encouraged the crew to abandon ship. "It looks like the end of the Fighting G, lad," he told Mne 'Taff' Evans, "Now over the side you go." A stoker passed the ship's beloved dog Toby too frightened to move. He picked the animal up and lowered him into the water; the last time the mascot was seen, he was clinging to a piece a wood.

In the finest traditions of the Service, Capt Henry Rowley was the last man to leave Gloucester. As he did the cruiser turned turtle and sank. "Thus went the gallant Gloucester," Andrew Cunningham eulogised a decade later. "She had endured all things and no ship had worked harder or had more risky tasks. She had been hit by bombs more times than any other vessel – and always come up smiling."

This terrible drama was watched with horror aboard HMS Fiji. But she could do no more herself than cast rafts into the water for the Fighting Gs to cling on to. She departed the scene quickly, for she was locked in her own mortal struggle with Luftwaffe.

Gloucester had vanished by the time *Oberfeldwebel* Hein Boecker's Ju88 appeared overhead with two comrades. From more than 13,000ft, he could clearly identify three warships below – and chose to fall upon the largest: Fiji.

Only when our three Ju88s dived did the three ships fire murderous, well-aimed flak. Even when I was diving, my aircraft received a hit in the cooling system on the right engine. After pulling up, the radiator was already empty; the water and oil temperatures shot above 100˚C and I was forced to shut down the right engine.

The Fiji zig-zagged violently. It paid off. Boecker's bombs fell a good 150ft astern of the cruiser. The pilot turned for the Greek mainland, hoping to reach the Peleponnese on one engine. It proved impossible. The remaining engine could not bear the strain. "Our altitude became lower and lower," recalled Boecker. "All we could do now was land on the water." The Ju88s large glass canopy was jetisoned and, at a little over 100mph, Boecker put the bomber down on the water. Its cockpit quickly filled with water. The crew unbuckled themselves and drifted to the surface. "For a short time the aircraft was pitched at a 30˚ angle in the water, then it shot towards the seabed like an arrow," the pilot remembered. The rubber dinghy, which had automatically inflated when the canopy was ejected, floated on the water and threatened to be carried away by the current. The fliers swam towards it and hauled themselves in one-by-one.

Hein Bocker's bomber was one of at least 20 to attack Fiji in a four-hour period. Junkers. Heinkels. Messerschmitts. "As I looked up at them I remember thinking: how beautiful they look, just like a flight of swallows with the sun shining on them," gunner Leonard Eades remembered. "But that idea was dispelled when they released all their bombs in a pattern." Fiji had taken a battering and was down to her last rounds of ammunitions. Her decks were littered with empty shell cases. Night offered the only hope. "The sun was well down in the sky and if we could hold them for an hour, we should get away," Eades recalled.

It was not to be.

A *Jabo* swooped out of the sun – it was a favourite tactic of the Messerschmitt pilots – and caught the Fiji off guard. A terrible explosion rocked the cruiser and momentarily lifted her out of the water. Immediately she listed 30˚ to port, steam hissed from the boilers, but still she was making 17kts. The ship fought off the next wave of Me109s but only the pom-poms were firing now. A final wave of *Jabos* swept in. The first bomb missed, but the second brought Fiji to a halt. "It was plain to all that



we were doomed," Leonard Eades remembered. The ship's boats were wrecked. She had cast her floats into the sea to save the Gloucestermen. All the men of Fiji could do was rip up anything which would float and throw it into the sea to cling on to.

Even as the cruiser died, the Luftwaffe continued to attack. A bomb from a Heinkel glinted and glowed red and gold as it spun down. And then it exploded in the catapult space for the cruiser's Walrus spotter planes, killing scores of men waiting their turn to abandon ship.

Leonard Eades was among the last of the crew to abandon ship. Fiji was listing at 60˚ by now. He grabbed a rope swinging from a davit and walked down the ship's side into the water, where he used a 6in cartridge case as a 'liferaft'.

The sun had gone down by now – but there was still sufficient light for the Luftwaffe to remain overhead. Kandahar and Kingston dropped boats and Carley floats for the survivors, then withdrew until darkness had fallen and the German bombers had disappeared to pick up the men in the water. They rescued 523 men out of 780 aboard. Leonard Eades vaguely remembered clutching a rope thrown down by a destroyer – he couldn't remember which one, nor could he remember being rescued. "I came to to find myself laying on a messdeck table wrapped in a blanket and someone forcing Navy rum through my clenched teeth."

There was no such salvation for the Gloucestermen. Before night fell, they had been strafed repeatedly by Me109s and Ju88s, opening fire with their cannon at a range of just 200 yards. The sailors could see the tracer racing towards them. They could hear the bullets striking the water with a sharp slap. Some dived over the sides of their rafts, many never returned when the enemy aircraft had passed.

At his headquarters in Athens, Wolfram von Richthofen pored over a myriad of reports. He had indeed commited everything against the "English" – and the English had suffered "hit after hit" as a result. "Ships sink and burn," he recorded in his diary with barely-contained glee. "They burn and sink, listing or trailing oil behind them." He continued:

The results are not clear, but I have the assured feeling of a great and decisive success. We have proved conclusively that a fleet cannot operate in waters within range of the Luftwaffe."

Wolfram von Richthofen was convinced "six cruisers and three destroyers had been sunk for sure", others would succumb in the night...

Six hundred miles away in Alexandria, it had been a trying day for Andrew Cunningham and his staff. "I came to dread every ring on the telephone, every knock on the door and the arrival of each fresh signal," the admiral recalled. "In something less than 12 hours of fighting against the unhampered Luftwaffe we had lost so much."

ABC never tried to 'micro manage' his forces, but today he wished he could. He would not have broken off the attacks against the convoys of caiques – "I could cheerfully have put up with our losses had we had some thousands more Hun soldiers swimming in the Aegaen" – nor too the decision to send such four ships back to rescue Greyhound's survivors. It had cost him the Fiji and Gloucester. "They were practically out of ammunition, but even had they been full up I think they would have gone."

In short, May 22 had cost Cunningham two battleships damaged, two cruisers sunk, two more damaged and one destroyer sunk – not to mention the toll in men: well over 1,000 dead, missing or wounded. And then there was the moral damage, "the anxiety and physical strain the men were under". The sailors could survive high-level bombing – and the ships invariably could avoid the falling bombs by zig-zagging at high speed. But the Stukas with their 'Trumpets of Jericho' – small propellers on their undercarriage which served no purpose other than to terrify the enemy – gnawed at the nerves. One officer warned:

The effect on the mind and nerves of continual exposure to air attack in addition to ordinary action at sea [is] the same sort of thing as shell-shock... The nerves of well-disciplined, intelligent and courageous officers and men can give way because the strain of the fight has been too great for them.

Mentally and materially, the *Seeluftschlacht* – air-sea battle, as von Richthofen called it – off Crete was, in Admiral Cunningham's eyes – "nothing short of a trial of strength between the Mediterranean Fleet and German Air Force". He told the Admiralty as much, but the men in Whitehall – not the First Sea Lord Sir Dudley Pound and certainly not Winston Churchill – evidently didn't 'get it'. They ignored the facts and simply ordered Cunningham to commit his ships regardless. The admiral snapped:

I feel that their Lordships should know that the effect of recent operations on personnel is cumulative. Our light craft, officers, men and machinery alike are nearing exhaustion. Since the end of February they have been kept running almost to the limit of endurance and now, when work is redoubled, they are faced with an air concentration beside which, I am assured, that in Norway was child's play. It is inadvisable to drive men beyond a certain point.

And yet this depressing assessment contrasted with the message ABC sent the hard-worn men of the Mediterranean Fleet.

The Army is just holding its own against constant reinforcement of airborne enemy troops. We must not let them down. At whatever cost to ourselves, we must land reinforcements for them and keep the enemy from using the sea. There are indications that the enemy resources are stretched to the limit. We can and must outlast them. Stick it out.

Stick it out the Mediterranean Fleet would. And the butcher's bill would grow ever longer.

IN THE small hours of May 23, HMS Kelly and Kashmir were racing towards Maleme to bombard the German troops who now had a tentative hold on the airfield. As she closed the Cretan coast, Kelly's radar picked up two faint signals, perhaps a mile away at best. The two destroyers opened their searchlight shutters to reveal a couple of caiques which had evaded the earlier holocaust. The guns of the destroyers blew the trawlers apart. On Kelly's bridge Mountbatten watched "Germans in full marching order jumping into the sea." A few stood on the caique's upper deck, gave the Nazi salute, and leapt into the sea crying: "Heil Hitler!"

Having dispatched the fishing vessels, the 4.7in guns turned towards Crete. Ashore New Zealand troops watched the muzzle flashes lighting up the night – then waited for the shells to impact. All landed in the middle of the German lines. "We cheered like hell," one Kiwi remembered.

With the first glimmers of light on the horizon, Kelly and Kashmir turned to rejoin the rest of the Fleet. They stumbled on another caique, evidently carrying ammunition, for under the guns of the Kelly she exploded "like a firework display on November 5," Mountbatten remembered. "But that was the last of our luck."

First light on Friday found Arthur Stevens and his shipmate Ginge Connolly clinging to a makeshift liferaft. After a night in the water, the men were cold – they urinated on each other to keep warm.

Dorniers and Heinkels didn't bother Louis Mountbatten especially. At 30kts, zig-zagging furiously, Kelly was an almost impossible target for conventional bombers to hit. But the sight of two dozen Stukas, stacked in *Ketten* – 'chains' of three aircraft – approaching around 8am did worry Kelly's captain. He signalled HMS Kashmir to act independently, then he telegraphed his engine room: *Full ahead* and the destroyer scythed through the Mediterranean at upwards of 34kts.

Two waves of Stukas were either fought off or the bombers missed their targets, but not the third. Kashmir succumbed first. The ship was torn apart – literally – by a direct hit, probably from a 1,000lb bomb. The port and forward sections of the destroyer parted and quickly began to sink.

Despite the increasing list to port, Australian ex-farmer OS Ian Rhodes kept firing the aft Oerlikon anti-aircraft gun until the sea devoured it.

"Then I crawled to starboard, intending to dive overboard, when a Stuka began dive-bombing and machine-gunning the swimming members of the crew," he recalled. "A German spotted me, and sent a stream of bullets at me. I got in a long burst, and saw the plane crash a hundred yards away." Only now did he abandon Kashmir. The whole action lasted a matter of seconds; between the fatal bomb and the two halves of the destroyer sinking, no more than two minutes elapsed.

For downing a Stuka as his ship sank, Ian Rhodes was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal – the only Australian sailor in two world wars to receive the decoration.

The Ju87s of *Stukageschwader 2* now focused on the Kelly. Mountbatten threw the destroyer hard a-starboard. At 33kts, the ship heeled heavily to port. And still a bomb struck. It wiped out the crew of X turret and their 4.7in gun. Worse, it penetrated the upper deck and exploded just aft of the engine room. On the bridge, Mountbatten ordered: Midships. Nothing. Then: Hard a port. Again nothing. All that happened was that Kelly's list increased. The rudder would not respond, nor too the engine room telegraph. The Kelly was doomed.

"Keep all the guns firing," Mountbatten ordered as another *Kette* of Stukas howled towards the stricken destroyer. The guns were firing anyway. However much the Kelly listed, the men continued shooting at the Ju87s. They only stopped firing when the torrent engulfing Kelly reached their guns.

She capsized in barely a minute. There never was an order to abandon ship – it wasn't needed. Kelly's captain resolved to be the last man off the ship. The destroyer had passed 90˚ and the sea was racing through the bridge when he took a deep breath and kicked away from the ship. But he was not the last man off.

In Kelly's engine room at least half a dozen men were trapped. The past few moments had been hellish. The lights had failed. The emergency lights came on. The telephone rang at least twice, but on the other end just a babble of noise. As the destroyer lurched to port, the engine room tools crashed off their racks. Water rushed in. The oil gushed out of the emergency lighting as the roll worsened and after a brief fire, the compartment was completely black.

When the rolling stopped, Kelly floated capsized, her propellers still turning slowly. The engine room only partially filled with ocean – an air bubble stopped any more rushing in for now. Beneath the engineers' feet on what had once been the deck above them, was an escape hatch. They took a large gulp of air then swam down, away from the upturned hull and up.

The scenes on the surface were surreal. Oil spilled from Kelly's shattered hull, covering men and the surface of the sea. There were men thrashing about, making for the solitary Carley float which had been jettisoned before the ship went over. The wounded were helped on to it, the dead were lowered back into the water. "The sea was calm, the sun was shining and this was the same Mediterranean in which I had had so many bathes in the days before the war," Mountbatten recalled.

For perhaps half an hour the Kelly floated, the wounded were hauled out of the water on to the liferaft, the Stukas returned to strafe the shipwrecked crew who sang popular tunes – *Roll out the barrel*, chief among them – to maintain morale. And then, as HMS Kipling arrived to begin rescuing survivors, the Kelly began to sink.

"Three cheers for the old ship!" Mountbatten called. It was a weary salutation which followed; the men were more interested in scrambling up the nets the Kipling was lowering for them.

Kelly has become the most famous ship lost this day – indeed throughout the struggle for Crete – courtesy of Noël Coward and *In Which We Serve*, a thinly-veiled silver screen recounting of the Kelly story. The fate of HMS Kipling, however, this Friday is perhaps the most remarkable of all the warships tossed into the Cretan maelstrom.

She arrived on the scene as Kelly went under – in her haste to pick up Mountbatten and his comrades, the destroyer struck the sinking Kelly, holed herself and caused an oil leak.

Having collected Kelly's 150-plus survivors – a remarkably high number given the speed of her demise – Cdr Aubrey St Clair-Ford guided Kipling to Kashmir's last position. Half a dozen life rafts had been cast into the Mediterranean before the destroyer sank. Now Kashmir moved among the Carley floats, picking up survivors. It became, the rescued Loius Mountbatten observed, "a battle of wits between St Clair-Ford and the bombers" as the Kipling spent three hours methodically hauling the men in each raft from the water. And all the time the German bombers attacked. Mountbatten counted 80 near misses. St Clair Ford 98. And one of Kelly's junior officers was convinced there were 108. Each time the bombers appeared, the Kipling gained speed and manoeuvred viciously – making sure at the same time she did not run down the life rafts.

The bombers and the Kipling remained over the wreck of the Kashmir until dusk, the former out of the range of the destroyer's ack-ack vainly trying to bomb the ship, the latter picking up survivors. By the time she turned for Alexandria, she had rescued 279 men from the two sunken destroyers.

After 24 hours in the water Arthur Stevens and Ginge Connolly were losing the will to live. Ginge could no longer hold on to the wooden beams which served as their raft. He raised his arms and let go, drifting out to sea, rejecting all his shipmate's attempts to save him.

Arthur was tempted to follow him. Conflicting voices in his head – "two little men with hammers" – told him either he was going to die or he must not die. He decided he must survive, not for his sake, but for his mother's.

Salvation was a long time in coming. Life was ebbing out of the young sailor when a caique came into view. Its crew brought the cutter alongside and hauled the Gloucesterman out of the water. "*Engländer*," a voice told him, "for you the war is over."

By the early hours of May 24, HMS Kipling was still a good 50 miles from Alexandria – and out of fuel. Despite a steady 17kts, the leak caused when she struck the sinking Kelly had finally drained her tanks. A netlayer, HMS Protector, sailed to refuel the destroyer. It was late Saturday morning before Kipling entered harbour. The ship's companies of all the Fleet would be lining the upper decks, St Clair Ford told all 500-plus men aboard the Kashmir. They did. Whooping. Cheering. Raising caps. The men of Kipling, Kelly and Kashmir acknowledged the salute almost automatically, so exhausted were they by their ordeal.

IN CRETE, Kurt Student's gamble was slowly beginning to pay dividends. Under the resolute leadership of Julius Ringel, not merely was Maleme firmly in German hands, but the invader was now firmly in control of the western tip of the island as New Zealand troops began to fall back on Canea. The Kiwis were exhausted. "Mile after mile we trudged," one junior officer recalled.

"Everyone was tired." So too, however, was the attacker. The paratroopers of May 24 were not the paratroopers of May 20, Friedrich von der Heydte noticed. "The faces of some of them had grown taut, almost shrunken, their eyes lay deep in their sockets."

The mountaineers had been trained for Crete's rugged terrain, but not for its heat, which drained the troops of energy and rapidly decomposed the dead. "The mountains were forbidding and dreadful," one *Gebirgsjäger* remembered.

The area was a desert of mountain peaks. It was as hot as a desert and about as lifeless and inhospitable. Our rucksacks dragged on our backs and the ammunition cases seemed like lead. Many fell out with a sort of heat stroke or exhaustion and lay there almost paralysed. Night was bitterly cold and we lay shivering in our tents.

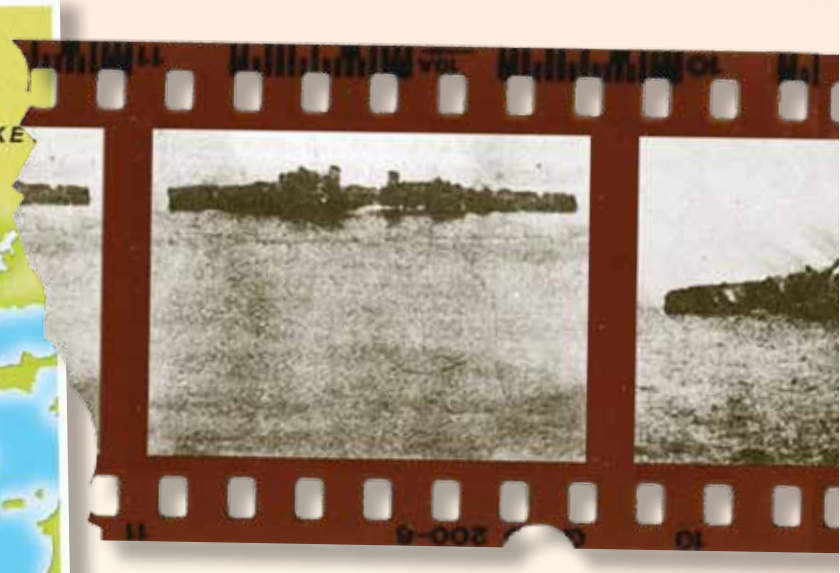
I remember Crete as the place of black corpses. The bodies, left lying for days in the hot sun, had all turned black and had swollen. Most of them were covered with greenbottles and the stink of decay was everywhere.

Continued on page vi

● *'The sky was lit up by German parachutists who became balls of flame as they leapt from aeroplanes set on fire by anti-aircraft fire'... A blazing Junkers 52 trails black smoke over Heraklion on the first day of the invasion of Crete*

Picture: Imperial War Museum A004154





● *'Thus went the gallant Gloucester'... The death roll of the Fighting G – as captured by the camera of a Luftwaffe bomber*

Continued from page v

Paratroop battalion commander Walter Gericke was appalled by the sights of Crete.

Among the boughs of the olive trees could be seen the white silk of the parachutes with their tangles of twisted cords. Dead parachutists, still in their full equipment, hung suspended from the branches swinging gently to and fro in the light breeze. Everywhere were the dead… Here and there among the debris lay a dead Englishman or New Zealander. All alike, without regard to nationality, had turned black in the burning heat. Around them buzzed the fat blue flies.

Nor did the horrors of Crete end on the island. At Tatoi airfield ten miles north of Athens a Junkers 52 transporter had landed almost every hour carrying wounded soldiers. In tropical helmets and short trousers, German medics hurriedly offloaded the injured from the aircraft, gave them water – temperatures by day nudged 54˚C – checked their bandages, then loaded the men into waiting ambulances.

Six hundred miles to the south-east, the naval and civilian hospitals found they could not cope with the influx of wounded from arriving warships. Many were transported to Cairo by train, among them Mne Arthur Jones, the sole survivor of a 6in gun crew on Warspite. "It was baking hot in that train, simply awful," he recalled. "Egypt is famous for its flies but with my hands bandaged up because of my burns, I couldn't even knock the little beggars off when they crawled all over me."

Having dashed off a terse telegram to his wife – "Once again all right but this time heartbroken" – Capt Louis Mountbatten washed and changed into a borrowed tropical uniform. His men washed and changed in a supply ship, received a meal, cigarettes and chocolate and were told to muster in a shed in the dockyard. Of a ship's company once some 220 strong, there were now fewer than 100 still fit for duty. For the last time their commanding officer addressed them, mounting a wooden crate to do so.

"The Kelly has been in one scrap after another, but even when we have had men killed the majority survived and brought the old ship back," Mountbatten told his men. "Now she lies in 1,500 fathoms and with her more than half our shipmates.

"If they had to die, what a grand way to go, for now they all lie together with the ship we loved and they are in very good company."

The survivors would be dispersed, scattered around the Fleet. "Next time you are in action, remember the Kelly," Mountbatten urged his shipmates. "As you ram each shell home into the gun, shout 'Kelly!' and so her spirit will go on inspiring us until victory is won."

After wishing his crew good luck, Mountbatten shook the hand of each and every one of them – a scene famously recreated by Noël Coward. "There weren't very many of them," Kelly's last commanding officer remembered a quarter of a century later, "and it was almost more than I could bear."

It wasn't only the Royal Navy which suffered at the hands of the Luftwaffe. The Stukas were no more forgiving over the land than they were over the ocean. On the afternoon of May 24 they subjected Canea to the same lesson in air power taught Warsaw, Rotterdam, Belgrade. Over four hours, the streets of the city were subjected to wave upon wave of Stuka attacks. In between the few pauses in the bombing, the German aircraft strafed the streets to catch any civilians who might dare to venture out. When the attacks ceased, the old Canea was gone, hidden behind huge clouds of dust and smoke while flames tinged the night sky red. In the villages on the edge of the Cretan capital, people watched transfixed. "To them it was like the end of the world," one observer wrote. "Some of the men had tears streaming down their faces and others shook their fists and cursed the Germans."

From east and west, the *Gebirgsjäger* and *Fallschirmjäger* were now closing in on Canea. The heights of Galatas, three miles outside the city, formed the last natural – and unnatural – barrier, for it was here that New Zealand troops dug in. They "defended themselves like bulldogs" until, in the mid-afternoon of May 25, Stukas pummelled their lines. The front-line vanished, hidden by "an inferno of dark smoke and lightning-like explosions". It still took the rest of the evening and night to conquer Galatas. The village changed hands at least twice before the New Zealanders pulled out for good. Daylight revealed a charnel house. Julius Ringel remembered:

Many brave soldiers, friend and foe, were lying in the streets, on the heights and in the gardens, countless weapons and equipment covered the streets and demolished tanks were standing around alongside the roads.

The decisive battle for Crete had been won – and lost. Canea and Suda Bay were now within the Germans' grasp. And the fall of both meant the fall of Crete.

LONG before dawn that same Monday, HMS Formidable was ploughing through the Mediterranean, southeast of Crete. A sizeable naval force was clustered around her – battleships Queen Elizabeth and Barham and eight destroyers. With no air power left on Crete, Formidable offered the only chance to strike at enemy airfield on the island of Karpathos, 50 miles east of Crete. Despite his misgivings, Admiral Cunningham had dispatched the carrier group to relieve the beleaguered ground troops.

Formidable possessed just a dozen aircraft. Two were out of action. Two more turned around shortly after take-off. Four Fairey Albacore biplane bombers escorted by four sluggish Fulmar fighters continued on to the German-held airfield.

At first light the naval aircraft appeared over Karpathos. The airfield was far beyond the range of RAF bombers based in Egypt. The enemy regarded the base as invulnerable. Instead, the Albacores and Fulmars ploughed the field, blowing up several Italian CR42 biplanes and Ju87s of *Stukageschwader 2* on the ground, plus some airfield installations. By 7am all eight aircraft were back on board Formidable, which immediately turned for Alexandria. The raid had been a success. It would prove to be a pyhrric victory.

On Crete, Bernard Freyberg pondered the fate of the island – and the 30,000 plus men in his charge. For days he had been exhorted. From Cairo. From London. "The whole world is watching your splendid battle," Churchill had urged. "The Crete battle must be won."

Freyberg was convinced his men had "reached the limit of endurance"; the battle "which must be won" had been lost – and told his masters as much.

No matter what decision is taken by the Commanders-in-Chief, from a military point of view our position here is hopeless. A small, ill-equipped, and immobile force such as ours cannot stand up against the concentrated bombing that we have been faced with during the last seven days.

Aboard battle-scarred HMS Warspite in the harbour at Alexandria, Britain's three Mediterranean commanders had reached the same conclusion. Andrew Cunningham conferred with his land and air counterparts in the Middle East – Lord Wavell for the Army, Air Marshal Arthur Tedder for the RAF – plus the senior Australian commander in theatre, General Sir Thomas Blamey, and the New Zealand Premier Peter Fraser – the latter two men particularly perturbed by the fate of their countrymen on the ground in Crete.

What all the men agreed upon was that Crete was lost. What there was no agreement upon, however, was the next step. The land and air commanders were for surrender. Not evacuation. Surrender. What was left of the Mediterranean Fleet would be sunk if it attempted a Cretan Dunkirk. Only Andrew Cunningham argued that it was a risk worth taking.

It has always been the duty of the Navy to take the Army overseas to battle and, if the Army fail, to bring them back again. If we now break with that tradition, ever afterwards when soldiers go overseas they will tend to look over their shoulders instead of relying on the Navy. You have said, General, that it will take three years to build a new fleet. I will tell you that it will take three hundred years to build a new tradition. If, gentlemen, you now order the Army in Crete to surrender, the Fleet will still go there to bring off the Marines.

And so the decision was taken to evacuate Commonwealth forces on Crete – 32,000 men, plus 10,000 Greek troops. As at Dunkirk, exactly 12 months earlier, the prognosis did not look good. An ashen-faced Winston Churchill warned the War Cabinet to "face the prospect of the loss of most of our forces there." Cunningham shared the premier's misgivings, but he felt duty-bound to the men on Crete. "The Army could not be left to its fate," he determined. "The Navy must carry on."

After two hours of relative lull aboard HMS Formidable, the klaxons sounded again a little after 9.30am. For the next six hours, the dive-bombers of *Lehrgeschwader 1* would harry the carrier continuously. With just four working fighters, Formidable struggled to provide air cover for herself, let alone the task force steaming for Alexandria. The overworked Fulmars flew five or six sorties apiece before mid-day. Few in number, they made up for it in tenacity. Three enemy aircraft were downed, for the loss of one British fighter.

The tenacity of the Fulmar crews was matched by the ship's companies of the task group. From above the impressive sight of the capital ships in the centre in a line surrounded by destroyers in a semi-circle reminded 20-year-old pilot *Oberleutnant* Gerd Stamp "of an opened umbrella". Except that each spoke of the 'umbrella' was spewing fire.

"There were continuous flashes on the water and, a few seconds later, again at our altitude as we flew past clouds of exploding flak."

Formidable, Stamp remembered, lived up to her name.

The aircraft carrier threw up the most terrific fire. It lay on the ocean like an enormous ironing board and spewed fire in rhythmical staccato: One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. The double-mounted gun turrets flashed, shooting rapid fire from bow to stern. The sight didn't bother me until the gunner called out: 'They're lining us up for the kill!' Their shells were landing directly behind us, getting closer with each salvo. Fact! I saw eight explosions behind us. The direction was right, the height was correct. Then there was flashing ahead of us and I flew through the swaths of smoke from the explosions. Now it was becoming time, however, and I dived and banked sharply to the left. Probably not too soon, because there was a judder above us, then I heard clattering as if somebody was drumming with small hammers against metal. One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four.. and still the aircraft carrier kept on shooting – and this wasn't shooting practice! They were shooting at me. Here it was case of: you or me!

By the early afternoon of May 26, HMS Formidable's task group was some 90 miles off the Egyptian coast – but still with 250 miles to go to Alexandria.

During a break in *Lehrgeschwader* 1's attacks, Formidable's radar detected aircraft approaching from the south-west. Two dozen Ju87s of *II Gruppe/Stukageschwader 2* – three flights of dive-bombers each led by battle-hardened pilots – were scouring the Eastern Mediterranean searching for British convoys on the Tobruk run. Instead, 27-year-old *Oberleutnant* Bernhard Hamester stumbled across the Formidable – and summoned the remaining birds of prey to swoop on her.

The carrier managed to launch two Fulmars but the sluggish fighters could climb no faster than 1,800ft a minute. It was too slow. The Stukas were upon the carrier before the Fulmars could reach the dive-bombers' altitude. The Ju87s broke formation, tipped their noses, the 'Trumpets of Jericho' howled. "They were greeted by a barrage of fire from the whole fleet," recalled one of Formidable's officers.

The sky was full of white puffs and brown blobs of smoke. Jagged bits of steel rained into the sea like gigantic hailstones. We were hurtling along at maximum speed, but the noise of the ship's vibration was out-rivalled by the roar of gunfire and the blast and crackle of the pom-poms.

And yet the dive-bomber crews seemed undaunted – their approach, the Formidable officer remembered, was "relentless". The attacking Stuka crews tried to ignore the sight of Formidable spewing fire.

I fix the target in my windscreen, close the radiator flaps, do all the things I've practised a hundredfold already, and then I push the aircraft over on its left wing and go into the dive.

The airbrakes screech, the blood in my body drains away, I've seen it all a hundred times, I've felt it a thousand times, but never as sharply, never as intensely as today. The target, the live target, grows in size in the windshield.

1200 Metres altitude. A single press on the release button on the joystick. A shudder goes through the aircraft. The first bomb is falling!

Bring her under control. Turn. Get away. And now, a glance below.

The carrier was now weaving ferociously. The howl of the Trumpets of Jericho was replaced by the piercing whistle of a 1,000lb bomb falling. The first missed. A column of water 80ft was thrown up off Formidable's starboard bow. Five seconds later a mountain of water towered over the ship. Two more near misses. Then a hit. A bomb smashed through a 4.5in turret and blew out part of the ship's side – thankfully above the waterline. Save for a fire, eventually extinguished by the Formidables, the damage was minor. Not so a second 1,000lber which exploded under the stern.

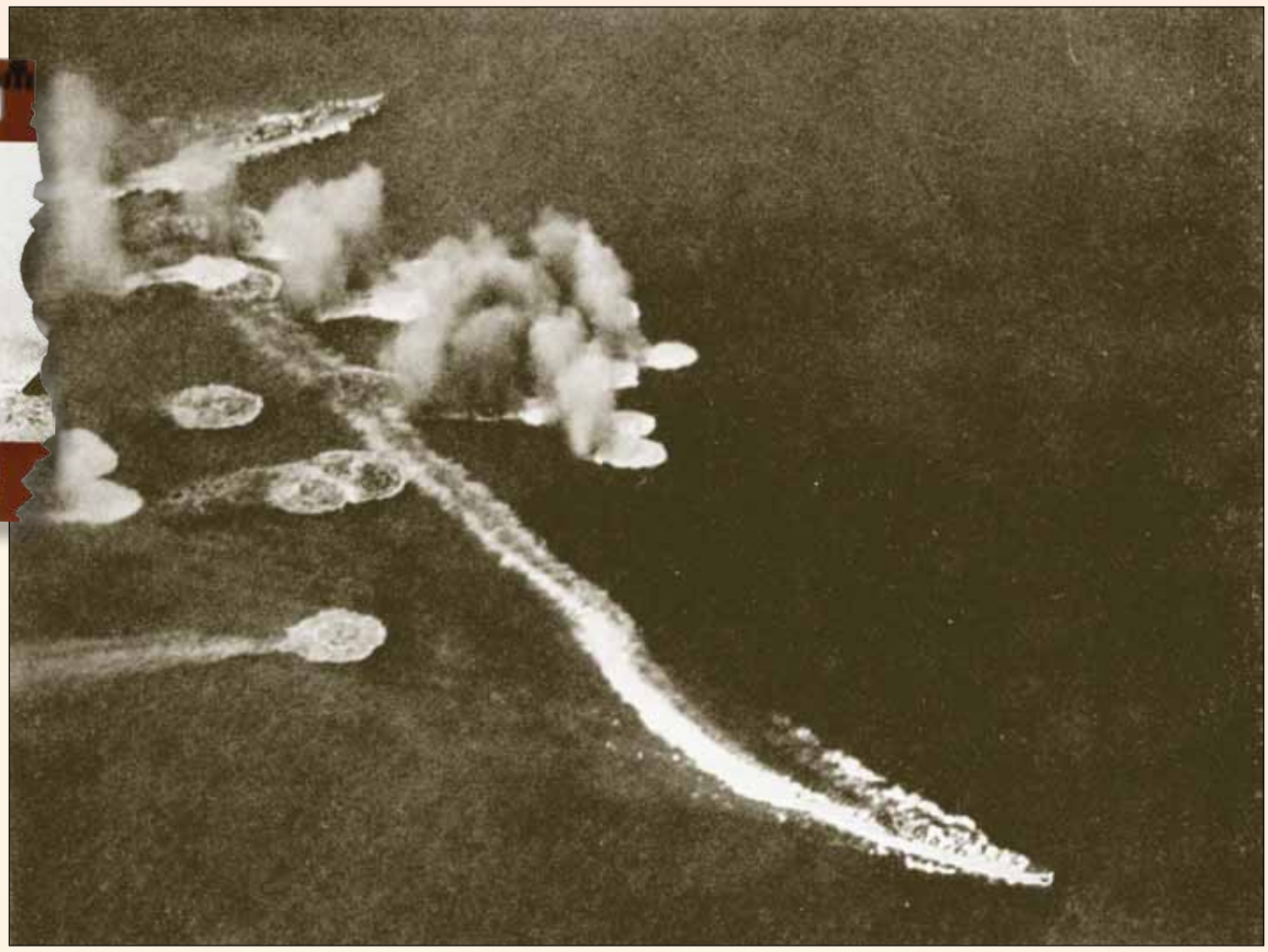
"It was an uncanny sensation," S W C Pack remembered, "feeling the stern violently lifted and then falling, shuddering like a tuning fork vibrating about its fixed end." Ten men were dead. Seven compartments were open to the ocean. The catapult for launches was wrecked, so too X turret. Formidable would be out of action for six months. And all for knocking out a handful of enemy aircraft in a battle whose fate was already decided.

ON LAND, the defence of Crete was crumbling rapidly now – and the fate of the island's capital epitomised this collapse. The first German troops entered Canea one week to the day Mercury began. "Not a single shot was fired," battalion commander Friedrich von der Heydte remembered. "It was an eerie feeling, making our way through the ruins towards our objective. The streets were strewn with debris. The smell of oil and wine, so typical of any Greek town, mingled nauseatingly with the acrid stench of burning and the sweetish odour of decomposing bodies." As the Germans closed on the city centre they found stragglers, refugees, troops preparing to flee Crete milling around. They also found Canea had been ravaged by a week of battle. "The houses are burnt black where the fires have raged, and the great bomb craters have made the streets almost impassable," one paratrooper wrote. "Thick clouds of smoke rise from a burning oil installation. And over all hangs the burning heat. Pitilessly the sun blazes down." At 3.45pm on May 27 the swastika was hoisted over the square in the heart of Canea. An hour or so later the town's mayor offered its surrender.

Outside the capital, a beaten army was streaming southwards, hoping for deliverance. There was no port in southern Crete – nothing like Dunkirk, Boulogne or Calais from where an army had been saved a year earlier.

The fishing village of Sfakia, just two dozen miles from Canea, but across the White Mountains – typically more than 6,000ft high, in places over 8,000ft – was chosen for embarkation. Those troops who succeeded in retreating across the mountains would have to negotiate





● *'Ships sink and burn. They burn and sink, listing or trailing oil behind them'... Two warships – possibly Gloucester and Fiji – are straddled by a dozen bombs*

hairpin bends and, finally, a steep cliff path which led down to Sfakia.

And here the Navy really would rescue an army from the beach: the lagoon and harbour could accommodate nothing larger than motor launches and small fishing boats. Nor was there anything like La Panne. The shingle of Sfakia were barely 600ft long and 60ft wide – there could be no massing on the beach. The ships would come by night, the men would spend the day cowering on the cliffs and in the scrub around the village before beginning their descent to the water's edge.

It was to this point that an "endless stream of trudging men" now came, winding along the mountain roads. The privations of heat – by day temperatures topped 40°C, by night men shivered in their tents and trenches – the unforgiving terrain and lack of food and water were compounded by air attack. Combined, they turned a retreating army into "a disorganised rabble making its way doggedly and painfully to the south," Bernard Freyberg lamented. "Thousands of unarmed troops, without leadership, without any sort of discipline."

Sfakia only offered salvation for the defenders of western Crete. There was no hope of the defenders of Heraklion fighting their way across 60 miles of arid mountains and plateaux. The only hope was to dispatch an armada and rescue upwards of 4,000 Commonwealth troops right from under the Germans' noses.

At dawn on May 28 a force of three cruisers (Orion, Ajax and Dido) and half a dozen destroyers (Hotspur, Hereward, Decoy, Imperial, Jackal and Kimberley) – combined they were known as Force B – departed Alexandria and made for the channel between Crete and Karpathos. The ships avoided the attention of the Luftwaffe until they were within 100 miles of Crete – and then the onslaught began.

"The Italians opened the bowling," recalled Hugh Hodgkinson, First Lieutenant of HMS Hotspur in true stiff-upper-lip fashion. They missed – badly – prompting loud cheers from the destroyer's crew. The Germans proved more successful. For three and a half hours, the Luftwaffe hounded the flotilla. Ten waves of bombers were recorded. They only stopped when night fell. Imperial. *Near miss*. Ajax. *Near miss* – she was ordered to return to Alexandria. Hotspur. *Near miss*. The rest of the force pressed on. Shortly after 11.30pm, the destroyers sailed into the harbour silently – "like a wraith" to embark troops. Each destroyer would take 800 men apiece, ferry them to the cruisers and transfer 500 to Orion and Dido. "Now and then Very lights would go up round the town to show where the Huns were," Hodgkinson recalled. The Huns never suspected anything; the troops slipped away from the lines around Heraklion unnoticed. They left behind, an Australian medical officer noted, "one large stench of decomposing dead, debris from destroyed dwelling places, roads were wet and running from burst water pipes, hungry dogs were scavenging among the dead. There was a stench of sulphur, smouldering fires and pollution of broken sewers."

In half an hour the first batch of troops were on board. By 3am on the twenty-ninth, some 4,000 souls had been rescued. Only the wounded in Heraklion's hospitals had been left behind.

As German troops tentatively entered Heraklion, the evacuation task group was making for open waters. It did not get very far. Within an hour, Imperial's rudder failed. The destroyer spun around helplessly. From Orion a signalled flashed through the night to Hotspur: Take off crew and sink Imperial."

It took barely ten minutes to empty the Imperial of crew and soldiers. And then Hotspur pulled back to deliver the death blow with her torpedoes.

"In deathly silence we saw a plume of blackness jump up amidships and a dull roar told our ears that she was hit," recalled Hodgkinson on Hotspur's bridge. One torpedo was not sufficient. Imperial righted herself, low in the water. A second torpedo was sent into her. This time, the destroyer turned over, then disappeared. Her captain Lt Cdr Charles Arthur de Winton Kitcat, withdrew to the sea cabin of Hotspur's CO. "We did not talk to him, as one does not talk to a man who has just lost his wife," wrote Hotspur's executive officer.

Now the Hotspurs contemplated their own fate. There were 900 men aboard and the ship was alone, for the rest of the Heraklion rescuers had left them behind. The sun would be up in an hour – and daylight meant the Luftwaffe would return.

"It was silent during that hour before dawn on the bridge," Hodgkinson remembered. "It must have been the grimmest hour every one of us had been through."

As Hotspur sped towards the rising sun, her first lieutenant moved through the decks and messes urging any man who could bear arms to man the upper deck for the impending aerial onslaught.

And then in the half-light between night and dawn, the outlines of black shapes on the horizon; the cruisers and remaining destroyers had not foresaken the Hotspur, they had slowed down and waited for her to catch up. There was a brief moment of joy on the Hotspur's bridge – but then the realisation dawned that they were were 90 minutes behind schedule. Alexandria was ten hours distant – and for at least half the 300-mile passage to Egypt the cruisers and destroyers would be within range of the Luftwaffe. The RAF had promised fighter cover from first light. None materialised. Instead, the official Admiralty chronicler wrote in an unusually dramatic tone, "there on the watch like birds of ill omen silhouetted against the early dawn hung four Junkers 88s."

The first wave of bombers proved largely ineffective. The second focused its attention on HMS Hereward. A spread of five bombs bracketed her, at least one struck the superstructure. Her forward funnel almost toppled off and the destroyer immediately veered out of the line.

She was left to her fate. The lessons of May 22 had been learned. The rest of the task force pressed on, its men watching as the ill-starred destroyer limped away, making for the shores of Crete not half a dozen miles distant. She was last seen "with her guns engaging enemy aircraft".

What happened to the Hereward next is debated. Some accounts say she was beached, others that she was crippled by Italian torpedo bombers, others still that she blew up.

What is not disputed is that several hundred men took to the water, where they were strafed by Stukas. They owed their salvation to the Italians. First an Italian Red Cross seaplane circled overhead to keep the Germans away, then Italian motorboats moved in to pick up the survivors. At least 120 men, ship's company and soldiers, mostly Australians, were lost.

As Hereward was consumed by her death throes, the rest of the task force fought bitterly to survive a seemingly endless onslaught.

A near miss damaged Decoy's engines. The force slowed to 25kts.

HMS Orion suffered at least five waves of Stuka attacks. The first fatally wounded her captain, G R Back. On the bridge he urged every man to "keep steady". They did. When the bombers had passed, he told them: "It's all right men – that one's over." They were his final words.

Dido was the next victim. From Hotspur's bridge Hugh Hodgkinson watched the cruiser simply vanish behind a ball of black smoke. A gun from one of her forward turrets was tossed up in the air like a matchstick. "The whole of the cruiser seemed buried in an opaque mass and I wondered if the bomb had gone deep and hit a magazine." He held his breath. "Then she seemed to come steaming out of the blackness like a miracle." Miracle or not, 103 of the 240 members of the Black Watch aboard Dido were dead.

Now the Luftwaffe returned to the Orion. The second wave to strike the cruiser knocked out two forward 6in turrets, caused numerous fires and carnage above the rescued troops crammed aboard. The force now slowed to 21kts.

The third and fourth waves caused little damage, but the fifth was the most devastating. A bomb penetrated Orion's bridge, passed through various compartments and messdecks before exploding in the lower conning tower lobby "with great violence".

The aftermath was horrific. The messdecks were packed with sailors and soldiers – the cruiser had picked up more than 1,100 troops off Heraklion. The lights went out. The compartments filled with fire, smoke, fumes. Most of Orion's communications were knocked out – internal and external. The first lieutenant, three senior engineers and the captain's secretary had all joined the commanding officer on the list of casualties. There were dead, dying and wounded everywhere: more than 250 men were killed, a similar number injured. Orion's steering gear was wrecked. Normal communications between the bridge and engine room were wrecked.

Half a mile away, Hugh Hodgkinson watched as Orion steamed out of control, trailing black and yellow smoke across the Mediterranean.

"It was under these conditions that commenced a struggle between decks, extricating and tended wounded, extinguishing fires, restoring lighting and maintaining the steaming capacity of the ship and repairing communications," the official report of the cruiser's action recorded. Its author allowed himself a brief display of emotion. "All joined in with a spirit of courage, initiative and determination which reflects the highest credit on all concerned."

One hundred miles to the west, an almost identical contest was being played out between four destroyers and Stukas.

Her Majesty's Ships Napier, Nizam, Kelvin and Kandahar had been dispatched to Sfakia to rescue the retreating troops in western Crete. They arrived as Wednesday May 28 turned to Thursday 29. They found just 744 men waiting for them, duly loaded while supplies were offloaded to support the influx of soldiers expected in the fishing village. After three hours in Cretan waters, the destroyers sailed for Alexandria. Come dawn they expected to find the fighters of the RAF overhead. They found nothing. Only at 9am did four dots appear in the sky – Junkers 88s. They bombed from high altitude rather than diving at their prey. The results were uninspiring: minor damage to Nizam from a near miss. The quartet continued on to Alexandria.

Over Force B, a couple of Fairey Fulmars finally showed themselves in the early afternoon, as did RAF Hurricanes which had spent the day vainly trying to find Force B. When they did, they shot down two Ju88s.

In all it's estimated that the task group Orion HMS led was subjected to 400 dive-bomber attacks for upwards of eight hours. An Australian non-commissioned officer had nothing but admiration for the way the warships were handled:

As soon as the planes appear overhead you can feel the boat lift out of the water as she puts on speed. Then the deck rolls over at an angle of about 45°. Then back it comes again and down goes the other side as she zigzags, turns and squirms at 40kts, trying to spoil their aim. Down comes the Stuka and lets his bomb go at about 500 feet. The commander watches the bomb, judges where it is going to fall, turns his boat almost inside out and generally manages to dodge it. Meanwhile every gun is firing all the time and the noise is deafening. The 6in and 4in guns shake the whole boat and the multiple pom-pom is going like a steam hammer. Four-barrelled multiple machine-guns mounted on each side of the ship add to the general din. Besides all these a lot of our boys had their Brens mounted on deck and were doing their best to add to the row. Occasionally as the bomb was coming down I glanced at the sailor sighting and firing the pom-pom and I didn't see the slightest sign of emotion on his face, even though the bomb only missed by about three feet and lifted our boat out of the water.

By nightfall, the battered rescuers of Heraklion had reached Alexandria. Orion, just ten tons of fuel and two rounds of 6in ammunition left, had to be towed into harbour. Of the 4,000 prisoners picked up in Heraklion 18 hours earlier, 800 were dead or in the hands of the enemy.

Force B's arrival was watched by an ashen-faced Cunningham.

I shall never forget the sight of those ships coming up harbour, the guns of their fore-turrets awry, one or two broken off and pointing forlornly skyward, their upper decks crowded with troops, and the marks of their ordeal only too plainly visible.

Still, eastern Crete had been evacuated. Not so the west of the island. After an inauspicious beginning on the first night at Sfakia, Andrew Cunningham sent a force with much greater capacity for the second – and possibly last – night: four cruisers (Phoebe, Perth, Coventry, Calcutta), three destroyers (Jervis, Janus, Hasty) and an assault ship (Glengyle); the latter alone could carry upwards of 3,000 men – but she could only make 18kts.

THE trickle of men arriving in Sfakia on the twenty-eighth had turned to a torrent 24 hours later.

"The place was literally swarming with men of all sorts," recalled Australian Brigadier James Hargest. It was the rear area troops mostly which had reached Sfakia first. They, Hargest observed, "were now at a loose end, eating up rations and using water that fighting troops needed."

Despite such confusion, the embarkation, when it began just before midnight on May 29, was remarkably orderly. Glengyle's landing craft performed sterling service this night as they carried men from shore to ship. "What struck me most when we set foot on the barge was the efficiency of everything," recalled Anglo-Greek doctor Capt Theodore Stephanides.

We seemed to have been translated to another world where everything was more civilised, trimmer, cleaner, better run – even the officers' uniforms were neat. Orders were given in a calm, matter-of-fact manner. Once more the unanimous refrain was on everybody's lips: Thank God for the Royal Navy.

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● *'How nearly the breaking point was reached'... No man better understood the burden his men faced off Crete than Admiral Sir Andrew Browne Cunningham – ABC – Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet*

Continued from page vii

Exhausted Australian troops filing aboard HMS Coventry possessed nothing but praise for the sailors of the Royal Navy who had rescued them – and nothing but hatred for the Stuka pilots who had hounded them for the past week.

"The Australians could not sufficiently curse the fates that had put them against an enemy who pinned them to the ground with Stukas while they never saw a single aircraft fighting for them," one Coventry crewman recalled.

More than 6,000 troops were embarked before the ships weighed anchor at 3.20am. This time, as Friday May 30 dawned, the RAF did appear. Just a handful of fighters, but for three hours it was sufficient to drive most enemy attacks off. But not all. At 9.30am German pilots evaded the RAF umbrella and bombed HMAS Perth, planting a bomb in her forward boiler. It was the only misfortune this day; Perth and the rest of the ships delivered their 'passengers' safely to Alexandria.

There were still as many as 10,000 Allied troops on Crete – most disciplined, but a sizeable proportion not. "It was a ghastly mess," Brig Hargest wrote. "No formation, no order, no cohesion." Men who considered their duty done simply wandered off. By day they hid in the caves and sheltered, by night they emerged and pounced on supplies of water and food dumps.

Still they had to be saved. A four-strong destroyer force was sent. It soon became a two-strong force. HMS Kandahar turned around with engine problems, HMS Kelvin was ordered back to Alexandria after she was damaged by a near miss.

Napier and Nizam did reach Sfakia and took away 1,500 men, mostly New Zealanders. Once again, come first light, the Luftwaffe appeared – but so too did the RAF. One wave of a dozen Ju88s did break through the aerial shield and temporarily brought the Napier to a halt in the water from a near miss. "Nobody could accuse the pilots of cowardice," one soldier wrote with semi-admiration. Down they dived through the ack-ack and the soldiers, packed tight on the ships, unable to take cover, caught their breath as the bombs crashed around." Napier's crew restored power to one engine and both desteroyers reached Alexandria by dusk this Saturday.



● *Sailors line the sides of a ship as wounded troops are offloaded in Alexandria on May 31 1941*

Picture: Lt L B Davies, No 1 Army Film & Photographic Unit/Imperial War Museum E3284

Already in Egypt was Bernard Freyberg. While Napier and Nizam had been collecting his shattered army, Freyberg had been picked up by a Sunderland flying boat. He had left Crete against his will and pleaded "one last lift", imploring Cunningham: "Do your best."

He did. But the force dispatched on May 31 – Phoebe, Abdiel, Kimberley, Jackal and Hotspur – would be the last. Hotspur's crew did not relish a return to the island. "Most reckoned we should be damned lucky if we could get away twice with a Crete evacuation," recalled her first lieutenant, Hugh Hodgkinson.

By 11pm the ships lay off Sfakia after minimal runs-in with the Luftwaffe. It was not the enemy air force but his ships which Hotspur, standing guard off the tiny port, now feared.

Motor boats, Hodgkinson reasoned, would find "a perfect target" off Sfakia. This was *mare nostrum*. "Never was it more theirs than on this night, but they did not even come out and take it."

Ashore, collapse was imminent. Soldiers were making for Sfakia by any route or means they could. Some men donned fake bandages and joined the lines of walking wounded hoping for salvation. Others had resigned themselves to their fate and simply sat down, slept, or enjoyed a night of bacchanalia.

Despite the growing disorder, more than 3,700 men were embarked – the last of more than 16,000 soldiers rescued during the hurried evacuation. By 3am the ships were ready to leave. A group of Australian who'd struggled through the night to reach Sfakia reached the shore only to hear "the sound of anchor chains through the hawse," one major bitterly recalled. He sat on the sea wall with a comrade. "He told me that things were all up and the Navy had gone. All our effort and skill wasted."

At 9am on Sunday June 1, the white flag was raised above Sfakia. Mountain infantry marched down the steep paths into the village.

Suntanned and parched, their uniforms in rags, caps flattened and caked with sweat and mud. Our mountaineering boots are patched up with insulating tape and leather straps, soles are worn through, nails torn out from jumping and falling. Arms and legs are grazed. Every group has its wounded and yet we carry on with unheard of élan. We no longer feel the heat and have overcome extreme exhaustion.

The news was quickly signalled to Berlin: *Mission completed. Crete is clear of the enemy*.

AT TATOI airfield, the medics and ground crew of *Kampfgeschwader 2* prepared to redeploy. Rumours swept the airfield. One especially. "We were to be redeployed to North Africa to support Rommel's offensive into Egypt," recalled a Luftwaffe doctor. "Finally the columns set off. Heading north. So nothing to do with Africa." Within three weeks, the bombers were in action in a new theatre of war: Russia.

Wolfram von Richthofen was among the first senior leaders to visit the Third Reich's latest acquisition. He flew into Maleme – "dreadful with many wrecked planes – 100 Jus!" – where he was greeted by Julius Ringel dressed in "a magnficent uniform: half tropical (courtesy of the English), half *Gebirgsjäger*". The mountain infantryman was full of praise for his opponents – whatever their nationality Ringel merely referred to them as 'English' – who had been "very brave and tough; their snipers in the trees were particularly skilful".

Richthofen quickly saw for himself how fierce the struggle for the island of King Minos had been. The paratroopers' drop zones around Maleme were "simply dreadful – rugged, steep and, where it is flatter, there are olive groves". Retimo was "half destroyed, Heraklion completely" while in Canea "not a single house has been spared". In Suda Bay, Richthofen found a dozen wrecks still burning and the cruiser HMS York – damaged by an Italian motor boat raid long before the invasion – "half burned-out" with two of her four turrets missing.

As the Germans took stock of their prize, HMS Phoebe and her escort of destroyers were locked in one final life-and-death struggle with the Luftwaffe. "Each hour seemed like two," recalled Hugh Hodgkinson. "We seemed to get more and more wound up like a spring." When a Fairey Fulmar appeared to offer protection, Hotspur's guns opened fire. So too the rest of the ships.

The anti-aircraft cruisers Coventry and Calcutta were dispatched to provide protection. Instead they were set upon by a pair of Ju88s. The Coventry survived, not so the Calcutta. Struck by two bombs she sank quickly. Nearly 120 men went down with her.

And so Crete joined the long and seemingly endless list of Nazi triumphs: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Yugoslavia, Greece. "Victory on Crete is once again proof of invincible National Socialist fighting spirit," Hermann Göring gushed. "It is a wonderful feeling to be the Commander-in-Chief of such heroic men." The Twelfth Army commander Wilhelm List was no less fulsome in his praise – "a new and glorious page was added to the history of the German Army" – while the ordinary German glowed with "pride and satisfaction" at Crete's fall.

There was no such pride and satisfaction in Britain. The British people were critical that the island was lost, and lost so quickly. "There is a strong feeling that the loss of Crete could have been avoided," the official monitors noted. "Once again 'our men's heroism' is thought to have been thrown away by lack of equipment and unjustifiably inadequate preparation."

Nowhere was that lack of equipment more evident than in the skies of Crete. The constant refrain – from soldiers, from generals, from sailors, from captains – was the lack of air cover. It had cost Britain an island, it had cost the Royal Navy three cruisers and half a dozen destroyers, plus four capital ships, eight cruisers and nine destroyers damaged – out of action in most cases for at least three months, in some as much as a year and a half. As for the human cost, 2,261 men were dead or missing.

"There is no hiding the fact that in our battles with the German Air Force we have been badly battered," Andrew Cunningham cabled London. He continued dolefully:

I would not mind if we had inflicted corresponding damage on the enemy but I fear we have achieved little beyond preventing a seaborne landing in Crete and the evacuation of some of the Army there. I feel very heavy hearted about it all.

I suppose we shall learn our lesson in time that the navy and army can't make up for the lack of air forces. Three squadrons of long range fighters and a few heavy bombing squadrons would have saved Crete for us.

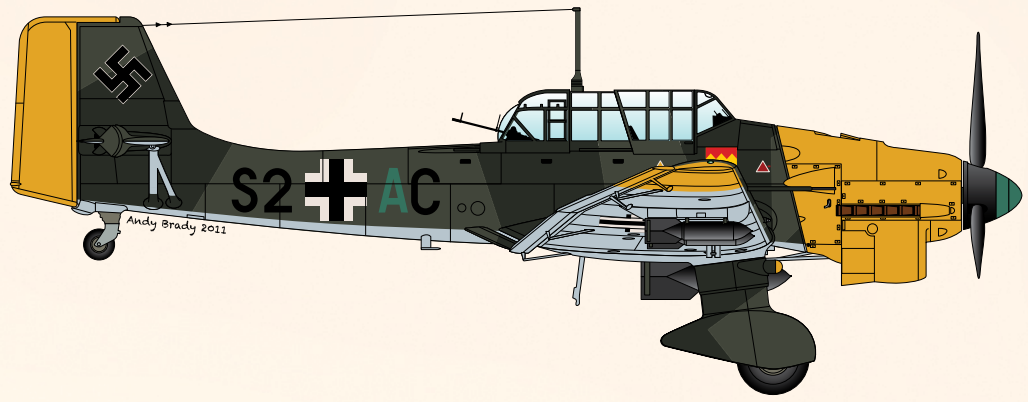
What troubled the very human Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet above all was the mark the 12 days of Crete – "a disastrous period in our Naval history" – had left on his men, how heavy the burden had been, "how nearly the breaking point was reached". But they had not broken. "These men struggled through is the measure of their achievement, and I trust that it will not lightly be forgotten."

Nor would Kurt Student ever forget the 12 days of Mercury. "Crete conjures up bitter memories," he wrote a decade later.

I miscalculated when I proposed this attack, and my mistakes caused not only the loss of very many paratroopers, but in the long run led to the demise of the German airborne arm which I had created.

In mid-June, Student was invited to the Führer's headquarters to receive the Knight's Cross – one of the Third Reich's highest awards. Hitler praised his paratroopers for their bravery – but they would fight no more. "Crete has shown that the day of the paratroops is over," he told Student. Save for a handful of special operations Germany's *Fallschirmjäger* would spend the rest of the war fighting on the ground.

While Kurt Student was being decorated, Egyptian fishermen in Mersa Matruh, 150 miles west of Alexandria, headed down to the Mediterranean shore. There on the sand lay a disfigured corpse wearing a monkey jacket, signals stuffed in his pockets. The latter confirmed that the body was Henry Rowley's, last commanding officer of HMS Gloucester. He was laid to rest in the military cemetery in Alexandria, one of only three of the 723 Fighting Gs with a grave. The few members of his ship's company who survived spent the rest of the war in prison camps. They were liberated near the historic Hanseatic city of Lübeck – flattened by RAF bombers in revenge for the Luftwaffe assault on Coventry – on May 2 1945. The few Gloucestermen left were flown back to Britain. They arrived on May 8, Victory in Europe Day. The Battle of Crete was finally over.



Junkers Ju 87 B-1 of *Stab* II/*Stukageschwader* 77 – based at Neu Phaleron, Athens, May 1941

Crew: 2
Length: 11m (36ft 1.07in)
Wingspan: 13.8m (45ft 3.30in)
Height: 4.23m (13ft 10.53in)
Empty weight: 3,205kg (7,086lb)
Loaded weight: 4,320kg (9,524lb)
Maximum take-off weight: 5,000kg (11,023lb)
Engine: 1 x Junkers Jumo 211D liquid-cooled V12 engine, producing 1,184 hp
Maximum speed: 390 km/h at 4,400m (242 mph at 13,410ft)
Range: 500km (311 miles) with 500kg (1,102lb) bomb load
Ceiling: 8,200m (26,903 ft) with 500kg (1,102lb) bomb load
Guns: 2 x 7.92mm MG 17 machine guns in wings, 1 x 7.92mm MG 15 machine gun for rear gunner.
Bomb load: 1 × 250kg SC250 (551 lb) bomb beneath the fuselage, and 2 × 50kg SC50 (110lb) bombs beneath each wing

Written by Richard Hargreaves. With thanks to the staff of the National Archives, Kew, the Imperial War Museum, London, and the Bundesarchiv, Freiburg-im-Breisgau; and Andrew Brady and Trevor Muston for the graphics.

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